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HOUSE OF COMMONS  
CHAMBRE DES COMMUNES  
CANADA

# House of Commons Debates

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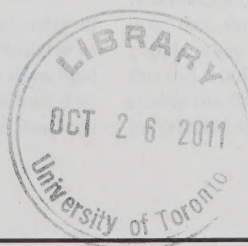
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OFFICIAL REPORT  
(HANSARD)

Monday, October 3, 2011

Speaker: The Honourable Andrew Scheer





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# House of Commons Debates

VOLUME 146 • NUMBER 43 • 10th SESSION • 41st PARLIAMENT

OFFICIAL REPORT  
(HANSARD)

Monday, October 3, 2011

Printed for the Speaker, under authority of the House of Commons





# HOUSE OF COMMONS

Monday, October 3, 2011

The House met at 11 a.m.

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## Prayers

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• (1105)

[English]

## WAYS AND MEANS

### NOTICE OF MOTION

**Hon. Peter Van Loan (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, since July 2009, nearly 600,000 new jobs have been created here in Canada. Our government is committed to continuing this strong record. That is why, today, I am pleased to table, pursuant to Standing Order 83(1), a notice of ways and means motion respecting An Act to implement certain provisions of the 2011 budget as updated on June 6, 2011 and other measures.

I ask that an order of the day be designated for consideration of this motion.

**The Speaker:** Accordingly, pursuant to an order made on Wednesday, September 28, the ways and means motion is deemed moved, the question is deemed put, and a recorded division deemed requested and deferred until later this day at the expiry of the time provided for government orders.

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## GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[English]

### SENATE REFORM ACT

The House resumed from September 30 consideration of the motion that Bill C-7, An Act respecting the selection of senators and amending the Constitution Act, 1867 in respect of Senate term limits, be read the second time and referred to a committee.

**The Speaker:** The hon. Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Human Resources has 15 minutes left to conclude her remarks.

**Ms. Kellie Leitch (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Human Resources and Skills Development and to the Minister of Labour, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, as I was mentioning a few days ago, the Senate reform act will also introduce term limits for senators. The act will restrict the length of time that senators can sit in the Senate to

a nine year term limit. This will apply to all senators appointed after the royal assent of the bill. It will also apply to current senators appointed after October 2008 whose terms would end nine years after royal assent.

We believe that a nine-year term provides enough time to enable individual senators to gain the experience necessary to carry out their legislative functions while also ensuring regular renewal of the upper chamber. At the same time, a nine-year term does not compromise the Senate's role of sober second thought in independent legislative review and in in-depth policy investigation.

Unlike the selection provisions which do not amend the Constitution, the term limits provision would change the Constitution. However, this change is within Parliament's exclusive constitutional authority under section 44 of the Constitution Act, 1982.

I would now like to address in more detail some of the concerns that have been raised about the constitutionality of this bill.

While some commentators would argue that this bill presents a fundamental constitutional change requiring the support of the provinces, I disagree. Our government has been careful to ensure that our approach to Senate reform falls within the federal government's constitutional jurisdiction. Let me explain.

Concerning Senate consultations, I have already noted that the process would not require constitutional amendment because it does not change the method of selecting senators. The bill does not require that the Prime Minister recommend the names of individuals selected as a result of the consultation process. Any provincial process would only be consultative in nature and not legally binding. The fact that these processes would be consultative is a key aspect of this bill, especially considering that consultation with citizens is a fundamental element of our democratic system. In many ways, these consultative processes would resemble non-binding referendums or plebiscites.

In that vein, I would note that the majority of provinces have legislation that enables them to seek the views of citizens through a referendum on any matters of public interest or concern. I would also note that the Prime Minister already consults with a number of people when making recommendations on Senate appointments and this bill would not change that. The bill simply proposes a method to enable the Prime Minister to consult with Canadians on who should be selected to hold a position in the Senate.



*Government Orders*

In 2006, the Senate convened a special committee to study the issue of Senate reform. The committee heard from a number of distinguished constitutional scholars, including Peter Hogg, Patrick Monahan and Stephen Scott. In its report, the committee noted that Professors Hogg, Monahan and Scott supported the view that if the result of a consultation process was simply to create a pool of individuals from which the Prime Minister could make a selection, then there “would not likely be any objection on constitutional grounds”. Since this is the approach presented in the Senate reform act, I am confident in the constitutionality of these provisions.

Concerning term limits, I would point out a similar amendment was passed by Parliament, acting alone, in 1965. At that time, Parliament reduced the tenure of senators from a lifetime appointment to mandatory retirement at age 75.

The Constitution provides specific authority for the Parliament of Canada to legislate with respect to the Senate. The Constitution also very clearly sets out those types of changes to the Senate that requires some level of provincial consent. Our legislation has been very carefully designed to ensure that we are acting in those areas where we have authority to legislate.

In its 2006 study, the special Senate committee concluded that the constitutionality of term limits was sufficiently clear and that a reference to the Supreme Court of Canada was not necessary. In fact, the committee further reported that most members of the committee endorsed the principle of the bill and agreed that “a defined limit to the terms of senators would be an improvement to Canada’s Senate”.

As a final point, I would note that nothing in the Senate reform act would fundamentally alter the role or powers of the Senate. The House of Commons would continue to be the chamber of confidence and the Senate would continue principally as a revising chamber, offering its valuable insight in the review of legislation. While our proposed agenda focuses on achievable reforms, that does not mean that the more fundamental issues, such as Senate powers and the appropriate representation of the provinces, are insignificant.

• (1110)

These are important questions that must be considered and discussed; however, we will continue to concentrate on our incremental approach and how its successful implementation will possibly ignite interest in further enhancing the role of the upper chamber.

The reforms proposed by the Senate Reform Act are not radical changes but are important changes that provide an alternative to the status quo which is no longer acceptable to Canadians. Doing nothing is simply not an option.

Our government is doing its part to ensure that we can improve and enhance our institutions to make them better for Canadians. Our reforms are practical and achievable, and we hope they will lay the foundation for more fundamental reform. To implement these changes, however, we need the co-operation of parliamentarians. Until now our government has faced resistance to our attempts to modernize the Senate, in particular some from within the Senate itself.

It is my hope that we can count on all parliamentarians to come together to implement these important reforms for all Canadians.

**Mr. Kennedy Stewart (Burnaby—Douglas, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I cannot help thinking that this entire piece of legislation is a bit rickety. Where I come from we might call it held together with duct tape and chicken wire. It is hardly an overwhelming reform, and I do not think it has much of a chance of success. We are going to end up with much of what we have now.

Could the member tell us to what extent she has consulted with provinces, and how many provinces have actually signed on to this legislation?

**Ms. Kellie Leitch:** Mr. Speaker, our government has been given a strong mandate. Part of that strong mandate was for Senate reform. We have taken a flexible approach to this with incremental changes, so that we can implement those things that are important to Canadians, to improve the democracy that we hold dear to us, and to improve our Senate from the standpoint of ensuring there are limited terms as well as ensuring that we have some degree of flexibility in what we are doing moving forward.

We are consulting. We had a substantive consultation earlier this year on May 2. The Canadian public gave us a strong mandate to move forward on Senate reform.

[Translation]

**Hon. Denis Coderre (Bourassa, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, with all due respect, my colleague did not answer the question. There is one reality for the Government of Quebec and another reality for the other provinces.

Which provinces did the Conservative Party consult? Does it have the support of these provinces? Which provinces support it? Is my colleague not concerned that this will still end up before the courts?

[English]

**Ms. Kellie Leitch:** Mr. Speaker, as I said, we consulted all Canadians with respect to our plan.

On May 2 Canadians brought us forward with a strong mandate for Senate reform. As the member opposite knows, there is already legislation in place for democratic selections in other provinces, whether that be in Alberta or Saskatchewan, which have enacted legislation for democratic selection processes.

There is a broad consultation that will be taking place. In the case of Alberta, it moved forward in 1989 with the senatorial selection act, and in 2009, Saskatchewan moved forward with the senate nominee election act.

This government is moving forward by creating a reformed Senate, so that we can ensure that we have democratic institutions that are modern in this country.

• (1115)

**Mr. Brad Butt (Mississauga—Streetsville, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, on Saturday I attended a round table in Toronto with the Minister of State for Democratic Reform. We had a very diverse group of people around the table.



We talked about different things around democratic renewal generally, and we did talk a little bit about the Senate. One of the things that people around that table did say was that they wanted to see the Senate be more effective. They believe the Senate plays an important role in representing regional interests and regional differences.

Perhaps the parliamentary secretary could give a little bit more background on how these reforms are going to make the Senate more visible and more active for Canadians?

**Ms. Kellie Leitch:** Mr. Speaker, the Senate Reform Act would encourage the provinces to enact the democratic process so Canadians would have a greater say in who represents them in the Senate. It would provide more of a dynamism in the Senate.

The bill provides a voluntary framework to assist the provinces in implementing a selection process to bring forward names of individuals for the Prime Minister to consider. It also introduces term limits for senators. After the bill receives royal assent, senators will be appointed for a non-renewable term of nine years. This will allow a routine and regular turnover of senators so that fresh and new ideas are brought forward. We want to move forward with this reform of the Senate in order to modernize the democratic institutions in this country.

**Mr. Randall Garrison (Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I was wondering whether the hon. member has considered the question of costs. Time and again we see Conservative proposals presented in this chamber with no costing. Could she comment on the more than \$100 million the Senate costs us every year?

In addition, what about costs for holding those election campaigns? On this side we question the value of a second house. The House of Commons is elected and does a very good job doing the public's business. Do we need to spend several hundred million dollars more on a second chamber?

Could the member comment on what costs would be associated with the bill?

**Ms. Kellie Leitch:** Mr. Speaker, this issue has come up. The bill does not provide funding for provincial and territorial consultation processes. Our government believes provincial and territorial processes should be funded by the provinces and territories.

Alberta has already had three consultative processes and the Government of Canada has not contributed funding for them. Alberta's most recent consultation process was held in 2004 in conjunction with its general provincial election. Alberta estimated that it cost approximately \$1.6 million. The Government of Alberta is the one that took on that cost.

**Mr. Ted Hsu (Kingston and the Islands, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I am not entirely satisfied with the answer from the parliamentary secretary to the question posed by my hon. colleague from Bourassa.

The hon. parliamentary secretary and I come from a province where the government is opposed to having a Senate and would like to abolish it. I was wondering if the parliamentary secretary would like to comment on what would happen if a province decided that it did not want to participate in Senate reform because the province

wants to abolish it. What if a province does not want to participate in the process as set down by the government in the bill?

**Ms. Kellie Leitch:** Mr. Speaker, as was mentioned before, this process is voluntary. We look forward to working with the provinces and using the framework as a base for creating what the provinces believe to be the best process for consultation. The federal government is not imposing this framework; it is voluntary. Each province should be given the flexibility and ability to put forward names. However, we are not taking away the ability of the Prime Minister and the Governor General to choose those individuals. In order to increase representation, whether that be of minority groups or women, the Prime Minister would still be able to select individuals even if they are not presented on the list provided by the provinces.

• (1120)

**Mr. Bev Shipley (Lambton—Kent—Middlesex, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I congratulate the parliamentary secretary on her presentation and some of the clarification that has come over this long debate. Since 2006 when the Conservative Party formed government, it has been the mandate not only of the Prime Minister, but certainly of this caucus of moving ahead on being transparent and having accountability within the Senate.

One of the things that continually comes up is the question around tenure, and the member has talked about it already. Not only is there a question about the length of tenure, but about whether we can actually do it. We realize that in 1965 that was changed and it was constitutionally allowable. Now we are looking at a term of nine years. I wonder if there has been a discussion with the provinces about tenure and how they feel about the term of nine years.

**Ms. Kellie Leitch:** Mr. Speaker, the Senate reform bill is an incremental approach to reform and reaffirms our government's commitment to make the upper chamber more democratic, effective and accountable. The bill is consistent with the government's efforts to encourage the provinces to implement a democratic process for this election but also to implement term limits for senators so that there is continued renewal. That continued renewal would be brought about through the nine-year non-renewable terms. In that way new and fresh ideas could be brought into the Senate for debate and sober second thought.

**Mr. Dennis Bevington (Western Arctic, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, on this fine morning I am pleased to have the opportunity to speak to this bill regarding the selection of senators and amendment of the Constitution Act, 1867.

For a long time this Parliament has been made up of two chambers, one elected and one unelected. When the provinces were first set up they had the two chamber concept but all of them got rid of the second chamber. History has shown us that the legislatures of Canada can function very well without a second chamber. The legislatures representing the provinces across this country do not have senates now and they are doing a fine job.



*Government Orders*

What has been my experience with the Senate here in Parliament over the last five years? I have a very difficult time identifying the positive work of the hundred or so members in the other chamber. It is not that they are not good Canadians or that they have poor work habits or that they are not intellectually capable people; it is that they are simply not listened to when they make reports. In the last while, there has been a change in the Senate. It has become much more political. The senators who are there very much play a role in determining government policy. Now that the government has a majority, the Senate acts in accordance with the government's wishes in moving forward government legislation or in blocking legislation that comes forward from other members of this House.

I would say that the climate change bill is at the root of the change that has taken place. That bill was voted on and approved by elected members in the House of Commons but was summarily rejected by the Senate. This represents for me a clear delineation of the problem with the Senate. Ignoring the Senate and allowing it to remain a basket of good intentions where reports are written and nothing is done with them is the old model. The new model is one in which the Senate acts as a policeman over the House of Commons for any of the private members who might not agree with the prevailing view within that Senate, whether there is a Liberal majority or a Conservative majority in the Senate. That is what has been happening.

Of course the New Democrats have supported the abolition of that institution for a long time. We are very concerned that the Senate does not add to the democratic process. In reality, it is taking away from the democratic process. It is taking away from the rights of elected members and from the directions that are given clearly by the majority of the elected members in this House of Commons. The situation is not good and it is getting worse.

I am glad to have the opportunity to debate Senate reform. I want to assist in improving the democratic process that we use to run this country, to provide protection for the rights of Canadians and to give good direction to the future for our country. I am positive we are all here for that. However, what we have here does not strike me as a likely addition to the good work of this body.

• (1125)

I cannot help but continue to support our position to abolish the Senate and look for ways to find approbation among the people of Canada for that position, because that is the democratic process.

A referendum on the future of the Senate and opening the debate to Canadians is a great idea. We support that idea. When this bill fails, as it is likely to do, perhaps the government will consider that to be a better way to go about this exercise. This is a better way to determine which direction we should take. My colleagues can rest assured the people actually can make choices. They have the capacity to look at what is going on and make good choices.

Having spoken to the general direction of the Senate, this bill purports to make changes to the Senate to give us exactly what I am not sure. I am not sure what the government's vision of the Senate would be after the bill passed, which is very unlikely, or what its vision of the Senate should be.

The Prime Minister uses the Senate as an instrument of control over the democratic process in this House. Would the changes made in the bill increase the Prime Minister's use of the Senate? Would it become even more of a tool for parties to use when they are in government? Or when a party is thrown out of government, would that party use the Senate as a tool to subvert the democratic will of the House of Commons?

Four years from now after the next election when the people have turfed out the present government but it has a very large majority in the Senate, I can see a situation where things could be made very difficult for a new direction for Canada. I do not want that.

I am not here to create a situation where those who are not in power have their hands around the throats of those who have been democratically elected to represent the people of Canada. I am not interested in that. I hope the other side is not interested in that either. I appeal to hon. members as Canadians to think about that. When Canadians make a choice, that choice should be represented in the House of Commons and not in the Senate.

What do we see in the proposed changes to the Senate? All senators would be restricted to a single nine-year term. They would need to be registered with a political party in order for people to vote for them in the elections that would be held in the provinces. People would have to register, for example, as a Conservative, a Liberal, a New Democrat or a Green Party. However, once they were elected, it would be for one electoral term and that is it.

Where is the recourse of the voter to senators? They would be in there for nine years. They would be under the direction of the government or the opposition, whichever party they were registered with. How would that work for sober second thought, for careful delineation of what is going on in the House, for advice given to the House, for supporting the democratic process in the House? How would that actually help? Where is the vision?

The Prime Minister would not be required to appoint any of the people elected by the provinces through registered parties. The Prime Minister could make his choice.

We really have changed nothing. If the Prime Minister did not like a particular candidate, he could ignore the person throughout his time in office. If it does not extend to six years and the Prime Minister is thrown out after the next election, perhaps that person who was elected by the people in the region would have a chance to be appointed by the new prime minister. As long as that happened within the next few years, they would have that opportunity. If not, good-bye to the voters' intent to put somebody in to represent them.

• (1130)

If the Senate is to represent the regions and the only way people can get elected to the Senate is to be part of a registered political party, and once they are in there, they still must be appointed by a prime minister, I just do not see how that would push forward the regional issues that someone who is actually elected by the region to represent the region would be in a position to do so. I think it would leave that senator much indebted to the political party and very little indebted to the region that will never get vote for him or her again anyhow.



*Government Orders*

Those are some of the provisions that the Conservatives have put forward to change the Senate.

What do we see? Not much of this will make a difference to what is happening now. It will not make a difference to the fact that the Senate is now being used to subvert the will of the majority in this House of Commons, which happened in the last two years. Nothing will stop that. If the government does not succeed in being re-elected four years from now, it will have a stranglehold over in the Senate. We will fight our way through that, as a new government, with extreme difficulty. That will become a vehicle for non-change and a vehicle for continuing the will of a government past its time, which is unfortunate to a Canadian democracy. That will not work.

The Conservatives railed at the Liberal senators for three years, until they got a majority. They hated them. They said that they were always standing in their way and always making it more difficult for them. What were they going to do? They were going to perpetuate, through this legislation, the continuation of that problem that the Conservatives saw very clearly when they started their time as government.

Where is their vision? What is their vision for the Senate of Canada? They should tell us.

However, like most legislation that the Conservatives put forward, they do not put a vision forward with it. They are scared to do that. They are scared to tell us what they are really thinking and what they really want for this country, which is unfortunate because this country needs leadership and direction right now. They need to work to make things better.

However, the only way we will do that is with disclosure, with understanding. When we do not have it, this will not work.

● (1135)

[Translation]

**Mr. Jonathan Tremblay (Montmorency—Charlevoix—Haute-Côte-Nord, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague.

We know that, fundamentally, the Senate should be there to ensure a separation of powers. How does my colleague think that a senator elected under the banner of a party will allow us to have a true separation of powers?

[English]

**Mr. Dennis Bevington:** Mr. Speaker, I actually do not see that as the trend that has developed in the Senate. I see the trend developing in the Senate much more in a direction of political parties being the primary driver of the Senate, which is unfortunate because, quite clearly, the good work that Senators have done in the past, and there has been good work, has been when they have spoken impartially on legislation, when they have made their way forward with reports that do not speak to any particular political direction but speak to the realities of Canadian life and the way legislation could be written that would better suit Canadians. Those are things that are useful. I do not say that they are useful to \$100 million a year. I have trouble with that because there is simply not enough work being done there to make that \$100 million viable.

**Mr. Brad Butt (Mississauga—Streetsville, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I listened carefully to my friend and I found a fair number of contradictions in what he was saying to the House. One is either for

democracy or not but the member is both for and against democracy. I found that very contradicting.

Our goal here is to make the Senate more transparent and ensure that it plays an effective role in Parliament. I do not think I heard the member talking about a constitutional war with the provinces to kill the Senate. , I think our role as parliamentarians is to make the Senate as democratic and transparent as possible and to ensure that the senators over there are doing good work for Canadians.

Perhaps the member could take a moment to better explain whether he believes senators should be elected or whether senators should continue to be appointed in the way they have been for 143 years.

**Mr. Dennis Bevington:** Mr. Speaker, I do not see any contradiction in what I said. If the prime minister would have the right to overrule any election, how could that possibly be part of a democratic process? That would be like asking a U.S. senator running for the Republicans to get permission from President Obama before he is elected. If we are going to have an elected Senate, then let it be elected. People make the choice and that is the choice they are stuck with.

Another point in the bill is that senators would need to be members of registered political parties. How is that democratic? How is it democratic for somebody who wants to represent his region to have to indicate his support for a particular party when he would be going into a body that is supposed to represent the region and speak for the region?

When those elements are put into the bill, the democratic process is taken away.

● (1140)

[Translation]

**Ms. Alexandrine Latendresse (Louis-Saint-Laurent, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I have a question for my colleague, whose speech I very much enjoyed.

I would like to know what he thinks about more substantive and fundamental reform of our parliamentary institutions. The former Bill C-20 on Senate reform very clearly set out a transition towards a means of direct election for the Senate, which would completely change the system. This bill was simply a transition. That was completely cut out of the bill before us today. There is no more talk of a transition or of more substantive changes. This seems to be all that the Conservatives have to offer us by way of reform. I would like to hear what my colleague has to say about that.

[English]

**Mr. Dennis Bevington:** Mr. Speaker, I will speak to why I favour the abolition of the Senate.

We do not have a 200-year history like the United States. However, there are many other countries that have two elected Houses where they have an arrangement between the two elected bodies to work together to create legislation and make government work.

*Government Orders*

A directly elected body of senators could be a terrible imposition on the smooth running of the Government of Canada. There could be very different points of view about how the government should be run, what direction it should take, and that would be coming from two groups of elected members. The senators, who are not now elected, do not have much jam when it comes to speaking for the people. If they were elected, I agree that they would have a lot more influence and confidence in their ability to stand up to the government.

I would say that it would be an extreme problem for our democracy right now. We do not have the underlying principles or the direction for two elected bodies in this House.

**Ms. Kellie Leitch (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Human Resources and Skills Development and to the Minister of Labour, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I want to correct the record. The member opposite commented on having to be a member of a registered party in order to have one's name brought forward. I would like him to look at section 19.2(b) in Bill C-7 where it states that the name of each candidate must be printed on a ballot together with:

the word "independent", if the candidate is not a candidate for a registered provincial or territorial political party.

Just to be clear, one would not need to be a member of a political party in order have one's name brought forward.

The member and his party talked about the abolishment of the Senate altogether. This would require significant constitutional change but really end up at the status quo. Would this help modernize Canadian society by just maintaining the status quo as opposed to moving forward with incremental democratic reform, as the Canadian public wishes?

**Mr. Dennis Bevington:** Mr. Speaker, having a debate about the Senate is a great idea. I happen to favour the approach of abolition, much as the provinces have with their senates because that is likely to be the most democratic thing to do. I do not see that creating an elected Senate in the end will be a good thing for our democracy.

Without attention to a whole number of issues that come out of our developed political system, imposing an elected Senate on it will cause more grief than productive results for Canadians.

**Mr. Kennedy Stewart (Burnaby—Douglas, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for pointing out the folly of this bill.

For me, this bill seems weak, ill-conceived and flimsy. I wonder if my colleague would agree that the Conservatives have proposed this weak legislation because they have put themselves in a trap. They have over-promised to their base and now must come up with legislation that they know will not really work. They have done this to themselves and now we are stuck with legislation that will not do anything.

• (1145)

**Mr. Dennis Bevington:** Mr. Speaker, the Conservatives have found the Senate to be useful to them in the last while in stopping legislation in a minority situation that they could not stop in the House. I think that has been of some interest to them.

In the long term, over the next dozen years if they are thrown out as government, if they legitimize the power of the Senate they will

have a powerful instrument to thwart the will of any other party that takes control of the government. It is not simply to massage their base. I look at it in a different fashion because that has been my experience in the last five years in the House.

**Mr. Tom Lukiwski (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to enter into the debate on Bill C-7, Senate Reform Act.

First, I tend to share some of the feelings that members opposite may have about the Senate because I was there at one time. Before I was first elected to this place in 2004, I had many misgivings about the Senate in its current form. I did not know, frankly, whether the Senate actually served any useful purpose. I was not sure whether the Senate should still remain as an institution in our democratic system or whether it should be abolished. However, it was not really until I came to this place that I started to more fully understand what the Senate was, what it did and the benefits it could provide to Canadians and to our democratic institution.

I am now firmly of the belief that the Senate plays a very important role in Parliament and should not be abolished, but it needs to be reformed. That is what Bill C-7 intends to do, to make some incremental preliminary steps to reform this institution, to make it a more democratic, more accountable system in today's society.

This debate will also serve the purpose of perhaps, and hopefully, pointing out to Canadians what the Senate actually does and how it works on their behalf.

We have seen in news stories emanating out of New Brunswick today that New Brunswick Premier Alward has stated that he wants to see democratic consultations on Senate appointments made in New Brunswick. He believes New Brunswick will need a strong, regional representative voice in the Senate should our Parliament go forward with expanding the number of seats in the House of Commons.

I think most members of this place know that one of the primary functions of Senate is to provide that regional representation in the House and in Parliament.

I can point to a very quick example in my own province of Saskatchewan many years ago of where this regional representation really came into play. Back 40 or 50 years, there was a Liberal government of the day. Unfortunately for the government it had no elected Liberal members of Parliament from the province of Saskatchewan. Therefore, Saskatchewan had no effective representation in Parliament, at least in the House of Commons.

The prime minister of the day appointed a Saskatchewan Liberal senator by the name of Hazen Argue to cabinet and made him the minister of agriculture. In that fashion, Saskatchewan had representation. That is probably the most glaring and best example of how the Senate and senators can represent their region in Parliament.



*Government Orders*

Beyond the regional representation, on many occasions I have seen senators provide very useful services and provide a very important function to Parliament. We have seen, time and time again, where senators start to examine bills that have been passed by our Parliament, by the House of Commons. After due diligence and post-examination of some of those bills, Senate reports have come back recommending amendments or changes or improvements to legislation, which in fact have strengthened the bill.

There is a reason why the Senate is called the chamber of sober second thought. It allows that second set of eyes to examine legislation that is brought forth from this place.

I could go on with many more examples of why the Senate is a useful institution, but I want to concentrate on two elements of the Senate that I think need reform. Those two areas are what Bill C-7 purports to do.

As we all know, currently senators are appointed. They are appointed by the Governor General. Many people think it is the Prime Minister who appoints senators to the Senate. That is not correct. The Prime Minister provides advice to the Governor General who then makes the appointments. However, one of the reasons I think Canadians have been so upset over the years with Senate appointments is that on many occasions senators have been appointed for purely partisan reasons.

● (1150)

If people have been good soldiers for a political party that happens to be in power at the time, whether they have been local campaign workers and good volunteers or have been fundraisers over time, it seems, on many occasions, that their reward for all of this partisan work on behalf of the political party they represented was an appointment to the Senate. Too many times we have seen blatant partisan appointments where the competency, the integrity and the independence of that senator comes into question, and rightfully so.

With Bill C-7, what we purport to do is allow Canadians to have a direct input into the Senate appointments coming out of their region. Let me be clear. We are not talking about direct Senate elections. That would require constitutional change. We are not talking about a system in which Canadians would elect a senator, where on the results of that election, they would automatically go to the Senate. The legislation does not intend to do that. We do not want to reopen the Constitution. We do not want to try to engage provinces and others in constitutional discussions about revamping the Constitution to allow for direct Senate elections. What we are however talking about is allowing Canadians in various regions the ability and opportunity to voice their opinion on who they would like to see as their senator or senators.

How would we do this? It is quite simple. Each province has the ability and flexibility to set up a process for consultation. They could have an election, if they want to call it an election, in which the voters of particular region or province would cast a ballot, usually in conjunction with a provincial election or a federal election, and then the people who would come out of that consultation process or election would have their names given to the Prime Minister with a recommendation that the next appointments to the Senate should be that person or persons. However, it would still be up to the Prime

Minister and the Governor General to make the official appointments.

In other words, provinces would be able to hold a consultation process to seek the input from their citizens on who they would like to see as their senator. That name would then be passed along to the Prime Minister, who would then have the ability to either suggest that name to the Governor General for appointment, or reject that name.

Let us be quite clear that any prime minister would be walking a very thin political line if he or she did not take the advice of the provinces on the choice they wanted or had made in terms of Senate appointments. A prime minister could ignore the advice of the province and appoint someone else. That would be within his or her purview, but the prime minister of the day would be doing that at his or her political peril if he or she did not follow the consultation process that the provinces had set out.

The beauty of this is that it would not require a constitutional amendment because the Prime Minister and the Governor General, as they have always done, would be the ones who would make the final appointment. It is just that in this fashion they would be able to take advice from provinces on who the appointment should be.

This is a very important first step in democratic reform of the Senate. Why? Should this legislation pass, for the first time Canadians will have the ability to directly consult with their citizens and will have a direct opportunity and have a hand in the appointment process.

● (1155)

We have seen and heard time and time again from Canadians that they do not believe the Senate serves any useful purpose because there is no accountability and because appointments are made for partisan purposes and for no other reason. The consultation process that we are bringing forward in the legislation would provide accountability because the citizens of each province would have direct input into the senators who would represent their interests. Accountability is paramount in a democratic institution. It is certainly paramount in determining which senators represent which regions.

I do not think there can be any hesitation on behalf of Canadians. In fact, most of the polling data that I have seen seems to indicate that Canadians from coast to coast are very much in favour of having some form of direct input on senatorial appointments. I believe this would be a process that would find Canadians approving of the attempts by the Prime Minister and the government to reform the Senate and allow accountability to finally come into the Senate.

### *Government Orders*

I could talk about a few other matters that are important with the consultation process, but I should also point out that most of the provinces are onside with this. Most of them have either changed or introduced legislation to allow for some form of consultation process or have at least indicated that they would be willing to entertain such a system. Saskatchewan has already brought forward legislation that would allow for the consultation process to take place, Alberta has had this consultation process established for a number of years. Several other provinces have indicated their willingness to enter into such a process so they would be able to engage their citizens in a discussion and ultimately an election or referendum of sorts to give to the Prime Minister a name or names of possible Senate appointments.

I want to also point out that the legislation would allow individual provinces the flexibility to establish this consultation process however they wish. In other words, a province may want to have a consultation process wherein a first-past-the-post system would be established and the name of person who received the greatest number of votes would be suggested to the Prime Minister for appointment purposes. However, another province may want to have a preferential balloting system, if there were multiple openings for the Senate.

The flexibility remains with the provinces to determine how they wish to consult with their citizens. It would not force the provinces to follow a set-in-stone path for the consultation process. I believe this is one of the reasons why most of the provinces have tended to agree with our attempts to reform the Senate because they would have a direct say in these democratic reforms.

The appointment process is one of the elements of Bill C-7, which is the ability for provinces to have a direct say in the appointment process for senators. However, I believe the second part is also extremely important, and that is setting term limits for senators.

I mentioned at the outset that I had some concerns before I came to this place about the Senate itself. One of my concerns was that beyond being appointed for purely partisan reasons, senators could be appointed for an extended period of time and there was no recourse. Outside of perhaps being charged and convicted criminally, once an individual was appointed to the Senate, that person was there for up to 45 years potentially. One could be appointed at 30 years old, with 75 years of age being the mandatory retirement age for senators. For that period of time, unless someone appointed to the Senate did something against the law or contravened the Constitution, a person could remain there and the government or citizenship would have absolutely no ability to remove the individual.

• (1200)

I think we all recall a story from a number of years ago that got great play in Canadian newspapers and media. There was a senator who had been in the Senate for several decades, and his attendance record was absolutely abysmal. This senator actually spent more time in Mexico than he did in the Senate. If memory serves me well, in the last year of that senator's duration, he had spent fewer than five days actually in the Senate. In other words, he showed up for work on fewer than five days out of a year. Eventually, once the story became public, the Senate took steps, and that senator eventually was forced to resign.

However, the fact of the matter is that constitutionally, once people are appointed to the Senate, there is no way to either reprimand them or force them to resign should they not be doing their job, and that is something I do not think most Canadians can abide by. I certainly cannot see the rationale behind allowing someone to be appointed at age 30 and then serve until age 75 with absolutely no accountability or recourse.

In this legislation, we are suggesting that senators would be appointed for a nine-year term, and for only nine years. They could not be reappointed. In other words, if a senator were to run in a provincial consultation process and ultimately be appointed to the Senate, if that senator wanted to run again after nine years, he or she could not do so. The only flexibility built into that system would be that if the senators, once appointed, had to resign because of, for example, medical issues, they could run again in their province and perhaps be reappointed, but only to serve out the remainder of their nine years. In other words, whether it was an interrupted term or a consecutive term, nine years would be the absolute limit.

Why is that important? It's very important because it would allow those senators to be beholden to the people of the region rather than to the people who appointed them.

As an explanation, right now we have people who have been appointed for partisan reasons. Who are they responsible and loyal to? Human nature being what it is, they are probably going to be more loyal to the person who appointed them than to the people they are supposed to be representing.

If senators were appointed for a nine-year term and appointed based on some consultations with the people of their region, in my view they would be more loyal to the people who appointed them. If they were only there for nine years with no chance of being reappointed, those senators would not have to curry favour with the Prime Minister or anyone else, because they would know that at the end of nine years, their terms would be done. Those senators would be there for a finite period of time and to represent the wishes of their region. That is what the Senate is supposed to be all about.

In conclusion, let me just say that while I believe there are more reforms needed in today's Senate, these two steps, as small and incremental as they may be, would be the first steps toward a total and needed reform of the Senate. I would ask all members to please get behind these reforms, get behind Bill C-7 and show Canadians that while we understand the role the Senate can play, we understand the need for reform.

• (1205)

[Translation]

**Ms. Françoise Boivin (Gatineau, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, the speech given by the hon. member on the other side was extremely interesting. He spoke about a senator who made the front page around the country. I remember it; we actually talked about it on the call-in radio show I was hosting at the time.



*Government Orders*

When I look at Bill C-7, introduced by the Conservatives, I do not understand how limiting terms to nine years would prevent that type of behaviour. On the contrary, the person who is elected—no matter how it is done, which the bill is not clear on—will be accountable to absolutely no one. A senator can finish his nine-year term and do pretty much anything he wants. All this bill does is limit a senator's term to nine years, instead of allowing it to span a longer period. I do not understand the Conservatives' logic on this one.

[English]

**Mr. Tom Lukiwski:** Mr. Speaker, to a point I agree. If a senator were appointed for a nine-year term, that person could certainly argue that once he or she had been appointed, we could not get that person out for nine years.

However, when we combine the nine-year term with the fact that the senator has really been appointed as a result of a democratic process within his or her own region, I think there is accountability built in. That senator will still have to go home and face the citizens of his or her province.

Human nature being what it is, I think any elected member here could say the same thing. We could say that we are elected for four years now in a majority government, so we can do whatever we want. Well, we still have to answer to our constituents. I think that single element alone speaks to the fact that senators, if they are appointed for nine years after consultation with their own province or region, will have accountability to their members.

Quite frankly, I would also suggest that while the member makes the point that nine years could mean they could come in and just fall asleep at the switch for nine years, the fact is that there is a system in place through which there is peer pressure, pressure from their provincial counterparts and pressure from their own constituents that would prevent a lot of the abuse of the senatorial process that the member suggests could take place.

**Mr. Ted Hsu (Kingston and the Islands, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I have a question about the consultative process between the provinces and their citizens.

Let us imagine if the Prime Minister were to simply promise Canadians that he would consider lists of potential appointees submitted by the provinces. I fail to see the difference between that and the current bill. The current bill simply invites provinces to hold elections and to consult with their citizens. In both cases, whatever the provinces do, it is voluntary.

Now, the Conservatives could say that what is really going to happen is that there are going to be elections and we are going to have senators who are basically de facto elected senators.

To my mind, that is backdoor legislation. That is having an elected Senate by backdoor means. I do not think that is right.

In that case, if the Conservatives are saying that de facto we are going to have an elected Senate, we should be consulting with the provinces and the Supreme Court, because the reality is that senators would be elected. We should be dealing with reality instead of trying to trick Canadians about changing the Constitution, but not changing the Constitution because we are not allowed to.

Would the parliamentary secretary care to respond to that?

**Mr. Tom Lukiwski:** Mr. Speaker, we are not trying to trick Canadians at all.

As I said in my presentation, the reason we are setting up the consultation process in the manner suggested by Bill C-7 is to do so in such a way that we would not have to open up the Constitution, yet it would still allow provincial input and input from citizens within provinces and regions. That is all.

Is it a de facto elected Senate? Yes, some could argue that it would be. However, we are talking about accountability. The reason we want provinces to consult with their own citizens before a senatorial appointment is made is so that the citizens of their own province could have a say in who they would like to see as a senator. There is absolutely nothing wrong with that.

If we can do so in a manner that does not require constitutional change and is efficient and effective, that is what we are trying to get at here. It is nothing short of that. It is as simple as that.

• (1210)

**Mr. Mike Allen (Tobique—Mactaquac, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my colleague for his comments today and also for bringing up the Premier of New Brunswick, who just this past weekend announced a willingness to enter a consultation process that could happen as early as this spring as part of the municipal election process.

Given that there will be additional seats added in this place based on population growth in provinces, would he tell me how important it is to ensure the legitimacy of the Senate going forward and how important it is to make sure we have these elective processes to ensure that they establish this legitimacy?

**Mr. Tom Lukiwski:** Mr. Speaker, I thank my hon. colleague for the tough but fair question.

All kidding aside, Premier Alward was quite clear when he said that he wanted to ensure good representation in New Brunswick. If the number of seats in the House of Commons is to increase because several provinces—Ontario, Alberta and British Columbia in particular—are increasing their population base and thus will require additional representatives in the House of Commons, he does not want to see New Brunswick's voice being diluted. He wants to ensure that the province has adequate representation, and one way to do so is to ensure that it has strong regional representation in the Senate.

If there were no Senate, New Brunswick's voice in Parliament would be diluted. Premier Alward is right on the money when he understands and appreciates the role the Senate can play and wants to ensure that New Brunswick continues to have a strong regional voice at the Senate level.

Premier Alward is one of the many premiers who are in support of this legislation, and for good reason.

**Mr. Kennedy Stewart (Burnaby—Douglas, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I find it a bit strange today to hear members from the Conservative Party standing up and defending the Senate. It must make for awkward cocktail parties when they say that they want the status quo with a few extra bells and whistles.

*Government Orders*

I was interested when the member opposite described this as phase one of Senate reform and that perhaps we would be moving on to a phase two. I was wondering if the member could explain what phase two would look like.

**Mr. Tom Lukiwski:** Mr. Speaker, I will only refer to Bill C-7, because I will certainly not pre-empt or presuppose what future reforms or pieces of legislation may be. I am sure my colleague, the Minister of State (Democratic Reform), will have much to say about that in future, but we have already spoken about some of the things we want to see in terms of democratic reform initiatives in Parliament.

I would, however, like to make a quick comment on the preface of his question. He said he found it passing strange that Conservatives would actually be standing up defending the Senate. I see nothing strange about that whatsoever.

We have stated on many occasions, and the Prime Minister has stated on many occasions, that while the Senate is a useful institution, it needs to be reformed. We have also heard the Prime Minister say that if reform cannot be enacted, then we are in favour of abolishment. I do not think there could be a stronger statement than that: that while we believe in the institution, there must be fundamental reform.

That is what Bill C-7 intends to do.

[Translation]

**Ms. Alexandrine Latendresse (Louis-Saint-Laurent, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I listened closely to the hon. member's speech, which was very interesting. He stated repeatedly that the primary functions of the Senate are to represent the regions and to be a chamber of sober second thought.

Given that that is the Senate's core mandate and that, in fact, since the Senate has existed, it has actually achieved regional representation only a handful of times, how will a partisan election, with the fights between parties, help this regional representation and this chamber of sober second thought, which is supposed to be wise, non-partisan and independent?

How will elections help fulfill this mandate?

• (1215)

[English]

**Mr. Tom Lukiwski:** Mr. Speaker, the consultation process or, as my colleague calls it, elections, will absolutely have a positive impact, because right now the current system is that the senators who are appointed are really accountable to no one, except perhaps the person who appointed them, whereas if there were consultations conducted on a provincial level, senators would be accountable to the people who elected them or at least suggested that they be appointed to the Senate.

In other words, if we have a senator who is appointed by the Prime Minister for partisan reasons, that person is really only accountable to and answerable to, in many respects, the Prime Minister, because that is how the person got the appointment. It was because the Prime Minister suggested that appointment to the Governor General, who made the ultimate appointment.

However, if provinces suggest to the Prime Minister that an individual should be appointed to the Senate and the Prime Minister follows through with that in his advice to the Governor General, ultimately it is the people of the province who made that selection and to whom the senator will be accountable. That is the beauty of this approach. A senator would be accountable to the people of his or her region and province rather than to the Prime Minister, and that is an important distinction.

**Ms. Jean Crowder (Nanaimo—Cowichan, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I rise to speak to Bill C-7, An Act respecting the selection of senators and amending the Constitution Act, 1867 in respect of Senate term limits.

I begin by acknowledging the work that the member for Hamilton Centre has done on Senate and democratic reform over a number of years. He has spoken quite clearly regarding our opposition to the bill for a number of good reasons.

The members who have risen to speak to the bill have stated that this is an opportunity to raise awareness regarding the Senate as well as some of the issues we face when discussing the bill. Therefore, I will take this opportunity to refer to the legislative summary for Bill C-7 wherein there are a couple of key points I want to raise.

It states in the background that the Prime Minister made an appearance before the Special Senate Committee on Senate Reform in September 2006 wherein he spoke of a step-by-step process for Senate reform. The process involved legislation to introduce short senatorial terms that would be followed by legislation to establish an advisory or consultative election process for senators on a national level.

As well, the summary states that Bill C-7 sets out a model statute that prescribes an electoral process which provinces and territories may choose to adopt. It is the word "may" that is a sticking point.

It also states that the provinces and territories may select senatorial nominees and submit them to the Prime Minister who would be obligated to consider them in making his or her recommendations to the Governor General for appointment to the Senate. Again, the word "may" is a critical part of this conversation.

We have heard the parliamentary secretary say that the provinces are largely getting on board. We know that simply is not true. The Ontario and Nova Scotia premiers have openly called for the abolition of the Senate. The B.C. premier has stated that the Senate no longer plays a useful role in Confederation. Manitoba has maintained its position on Senate abolition. However, if the bill goes forward, it will prepare legislation to deal with the outcome of the bill. Quebec has called the legislation unconstitutional and has said it will launch a provincial court appeal if the bill proceeds without consultation of the provinces.

The legislation is being touted as the forerunner of great Senate reform yet the provinces may or may not be on board. It appears that they have not been consulted in depth.

The summary also states:



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It should be noted that the bill imposes no obligation on provinces or territories to establish a selection process for Senate nominees modelled on the framework as set out in the schedule. It provides provinces and territories with an opportunity to propose qualified individuals to the prime minister, who must consider—but is not bound to accept—the names of the persons proposed. The bill effectively sets out an optional alternative to the current selection process. If a particular province or territory chooses to take no action, the current process—whereby the prime minister alone selects Senate nominees—would continue.

The bill highlights several other issues regarding this supposed great Senate reform. First, the Prime Minister is not required to accept the nominees suggested by the provinces. We heard government members say that the Prime Minister would honour that process, but there is nothing in the legislation stating that.

We heard the parliamentary secretary speak to the partisan process currently in place. We have seen its track record over the last five years, wherein Conservative Party candidates who were defeated in elections were appointed to the Senate. We have seen party officials appointed to the Senate. There is nothing in the legislation to prevent the government from continuing to recommend partisan appointments if the provinces choose not to engage in the process as it is outlined.

New Democrats support abolition of the Senate. It is difficult to see how Senate reform would be mandated in the context of this legislation when it contains so many loopholes.

In terms of history and background, proposals for Senate reform have been ongoing since 1887. I will touch on a few of those.

• (1220)

During the first interprovincial conference of 1887, provincial premiers passed a resolution proposing that half the members of the Senate be appointed by the federal government and the other half by the provincial governments.

In 1972, a special joint committee of the Senate and the House of Commons report recommended that senators continue to be nominated by the federal government but that half of them be appointed by a panel of nominees submitted by the provincial and territorial governments.

In 1979, the Task Force on Canadian Unity recommended the abolition of the Senate and the establishment of the Council of the Federation to be composed of provincial delegations led by a person of ministerial rank or by the premier of a province.

In 1984, the Special Joint Committee of the Senate and of the House of Commons on Senate Reform recommended that senators be directly elected.

The Royal Commission on the Economic Union and Development Prospects for Canada recommended that senators be elected and those elections be held simultaneously with elections to the House of Commons.

Finally, in 1992, the Special Joint Committee of the Senate and the House of Commons on a Renewed Canada recommended the direct election of senators under a proportional representation system. There were a number of other proposals in between.

I mention those recommendations to point out that Senate reform is not a new conversation in the House.

The bill before us reflects some of those recommendations in terms of an electoral process. Substantial work has been done and therefore, it would seem appropriate on the basis of this work to go back to the Canadian people to discuss what it is they want in terms of a Senate. Do they want it abolished? Do they want Senate reform? Do they want an electoral process? Do they want to minimize the Prime Minister's influence on those appointments? The amount of work that has been done, and the fact that virtually no change has occurred as a result of it, shows that there is an appetite for looking at the Senate seriously. Whether this bill is the way to do it is the question.

I mentioned that there has been virtually no reform since 1867, but there has been one, which has been mentioned in the legislative summary, that has affected the tenure of senators. In 1965, the British North America Act was amended to establish a retirement age of 75 for senators. Prior to that reform they were allowed to serve for life. Despite the dissatisfaction that has been raised with this long-standing institution's performance, there has been no other reform introduced since that time.

We have heard the conversation surrounding constitutional amendment. The legislative summary is not clear regarding whether this will require constitutional amendment. It is important that Canadians be made aware of the two opinions that exist on this.

Professor Patrick Monahan, a constitutional law specialist who was vice-president, academic and provost of York University, believes that a non-binding election for the nomination of senators would not need a constitutional amendment. It should be noted that certain changes are possible in federal institutions without formal constitutional amendment, such as the appointment of senators on the basis of non-binding elections.

Of course there is an opposing opinion. It has been suggested that this advisory or consultative election process may constitute an alteration to the method of selection of senators, in which case an amendment to the Constitution Act, 1867 would be required. In accordance with paragraph 42(1)(b) and section 30 of the Constitution Act, 1982, any such constitutional amendment would require the concurrence of at least seven provinces, representing at least 50% of the population.

Despite the government's assurance that no constitutional amendment would be required, constitutional experts disagree. It begs the question as to whether or not we will end up in some sort of long legal wrangling over that.

There have been arguments raised in favour of term limits for senators. Regarding term limits the legislative summary states:

Term limits could enhance the prime ministerial power of appointment, eroding the independence of the Senate and its sober second thought function as well as its historical role of protecting regional and provincial interests. As previously noted, prime ministers with a majority government lasting two or more terms could conceivably fill all or most Senate seats by the time they left office, effectively controlling the Senate. This would also exacerbate political partisanship in the Senate, further eroding the Senate's capacity for independent and thorough legislative review and regional and provincial representation.

In the context of this bill and the many assurances offered by the government as to how it would deal with some of the challenges, including partisanship, there are simply far too many questions remaining to actually satisfy the concerns that have been raised.

*Government Orders*

● (1225)

Part of what the New Democrats are calling for is a process to engage Canadians in discussions involving democratic and Senate reform. Although the 43rd report of the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs did not deal specifically with Senate reform, I will quote one paragraph which deals with the importance of engaging Canadians when talking about reforms of this magnitude.

It states:

Despite different approaches to the study of electoral reform, it is clear that no contemplated change can be done without citizen engagement. A successful consultation strategy will ensure that the process is, and is seen to be, objective, transparent and accountable. Citizen engagement also gives legitimacy to the recommendations that are made. The electoral system must reflect the views, the priorities, and the values of Canadians, and their involvement is essential.

Therefore, when we are talking about Senate reform, it is essential that we engage Canadians in the conversation rather than hammer through a bill that could affect the democratic process we have in place. New Democrats have consistently called for democratic reform. We believe there should be a system of proportional representation in the House. It is important that the bill be taken off the table and that we engage Canadians.

Members on the other side constantly say that in the last election they were given a mandate to establish this kind of reform. I would argue that as members of Parliament we have a due diligence to consider the legislation that comes before us.

We must also consider whether Canadians are actually in favour of it. To state that an election process stipulates that Canadians are in favour of all aspects of a legislative agenda a government chooses to bring forward simply is not true. If that were the case, that government would be required to present that agenda to Canadians at that time. That does not happen, nor is it realistic.

On July 6, 2011, Deborah Coyne wrote an article entitled, "The wrong road to Senate reform". Although I do not necessarily agree with her approach and what she says regarding Senate reform, she does make a couple of valid points about this piece of legislation. She states:

...the Conservative government is misleading Canadians into believing that mere tinkering with a Senate structure dating back to the 19th century – establishing nine-year term limits and à la carte elections – is sufficient.

She goes on to say:

Senate reform is too important a component of any serious plan for improving the functioning of Canadian democracy to be left to the legislative fiat of shortsighted politicians. Rather, the people of Canada must be directly engaged in the debate over this vital issue, and must ultimately be consulted through a national referendum.

Due to an insufficient amount of democratic legitimacy in Senate, our national leaders have increasingly deferred to provincial premiers on matters of national concern in unaccountable federal-provincial negotiations. The national interest is too often equated with the haphazard sum of disparate provincial-government interests, dependent on highly improbable provincial-government co-operation for even the minimum national standards or actions.

The result is a lack of national action on climate change, an increasing patchwork of health-care policies, the absence of a national clean-energy strategy, a crumbling national infrastructure, and a stalemate on pension reform. This ongoing drift toward national incoherence has not only failed Canadians, but has also led to Canada's increasing insignificance on the global stage. Among other things, we are ignored during international climate-change discussions, and are no longer considered worthy of a UN Security Council seat. Furthermore, with our recent infamous UN vote blocking the addition of asbestos to the list of hazardous chemicals, we have

relegated Canada to the sidelines of history on this issue, further devaluing the Canadian perspective on the international stage....

To engage Canadians, we must take the Senate-reform debate to the people, and away from the day-to-day operations of Parliament. A non-partisan commission of informed Canadians should be tasked with holding hearings across the country to listen to Canadians, explain the issues at stake, and discuss possible options for reform.

New Democrats would like to see one of those possible options of reform as abolition.

She goes on in her article to state:

Any proposal that the commission makes must then be made available for Canadians to vote on in a national referendum. Ratification cannot be left only to the first ministers, since they are able to stifle all possible progress in the national interest....

In closing she states:

[The] Prime Minister...has made the disingenuous claim that the May 2 election somehow performed the function of a referendum, and that, in that "referendum," Canadians provided the Conservatives with a strong mandate for their Senate tinkering. Our national representatives need to be reminded that, at all times – whether during, or in between, elections – they govern in trust for the people of Canada. It is their democratic responsibility to engage Canadians in fundamental debates, and they cannot shirk this responsibility for the sake of convenience.

● (1230)

I think that says it far better than any of us in this House have so far about the importance of engaging Canadians.

In closing, I would refer to a speech of February 10, 2011 by Jack Layton called "Canada's Senate: Second thoughts about sober second thought". I want to raise this because he talked about a number of democratic reforms that should be required, including true implementation of the accountability act and proportional representation. He also talked about what the current Senate appointments have done to very important pieces of legislation in Canada. I quote from Jack's speech:

Last fall, the Conservative-dominated Senate was used to veto legislation the Prime Minister simply didn't like. The Climate Change Accountability Act was Canada's only federal climate change legislation. It passed twice in a minority Parliament. It was good, solid legislation—supported by a majority of elected MPs. Legislation embodying the direction Canadians want to take. But on November 16, 2010, the Senate defeated Bill C-311 at second reading. No committee review. No witness hearings. Canada's only legislative effort to fight climate change—gone.

Of course, we have seen other circumstances where the Senate has disregarded the will of the House. I think it is a good reminder that the Senate has a kind of influence that people would think is undemocratic because of the way the partisan appointments take place there.

Later in Jack's speech he said:

Real political reform, of course, involves more than just the Senate. To really change the way politics works, we need to reform the elected House as well. It's up to all of us, in a minority Parliament, to make sure our political system works for the people we're elected to serve. To bring Canadians back in touch...Let's bring about the electoral reform New Democrats have been working for since the days of Ed Broadbent. Incorporating proportional representation would produce a fairer House that truly reflects the political choices of all Canadians. And it would bring us up to speed with most of the world's democracies.



*Government Orders*

In conclusion, New Democrats simply cannot support the legislation that has been put forward. First of all, the legislation itself has no teeth because of the loose way it could be applied. It would allow a prime minister to continue to make partisan appointments, as he can currently. It does not engage Canadians in what could be a significant change to the way our democratic process works. It certainly does not go far enough in looking at the kind of electoral reform we need in this House. In the last election, only 39% of Canadians elected a majority government, which simply is not reflective of the will of the majority of Canadians.

I urge all members to say no to this legislation. I urge the government to do that kind of consultation process with Canadians. It is very important to the democratic process.

• (1235)

**Mr. Claude Gravelle (Nickel Belt, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to congratulate the member for her eloquent speech.

This coming year in Canada we have several provincial elections. There's one in Ontario, P.E.I., Newfoundland, I believe Manitoba and in one of the territories. Presently, we have senators going from province to province to campaign in these elections on the taxpayers' dime. The taxpayers are paying for these unelected senators to campaign for their parties.

I would like the member's opinion on these unelected senators going from province to province to either campaign or fundraise for their parties.

**Ms. Jean Crowder:** Mr. Speaker, a number of issues have been raised about the appropriate use of Senate resources, whether it has been in provincial elections or federal elections. We are seeing taxpayers' dollars being used.

I know many members in the House work for their respective political parties in elections, but they do it outside of their duties here. They are not using the resources of the House.

I cannot see how this is a legitimate use of Senate resources: the travel is on Senate budgets and Senate resources are used to do that kind of campaigning. That simply does not make any kind of sense.

**Mr. Brad Butt (Mississauga—Streetsville, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, in this debate I continue to be amazed by a party that calls itself the New Democratic Party actually arguing against a bill that brings true democracy to the Senate. I just shake my head every time I listen to one of the members in the opposition get up and speak to this bill.

So my question to the member for Nanaimo—Cowichan is this. Would not the election of senators allow for much greater diversity in the membership of the Senate? It clearly would end the partisan appointments, regardless of which party is in power. We might actually get a couple of New Democrats elected to the Senate, heaven forbid but that would be democracy. And we would have senators there who would be reflecting the views of all kinds of Canadians. Her party also talks about proportional representation. We would have more diversity in the Senate. We would have more parties represented in the Senate. We would probably even have some independents elected to the Senate which would probably be a good thing.

Why are the member and her party so opposed to democracy in the Senate?

**Ms. Jean Crowder:** Mr. Speaker, as I outlined in my speech, this legislation does not guarantee that outcome. Bill C-7 has a lot of "mays" and "maybes" and "might haves" in it. Provinces may conduct some sort of process and that is a big problem here. Currently, there is one province that does that. One other province had legislation, but it is sunsetted. Other provinces may or may not engage in that legislative process. There is no guarantee that this legislation would actually do what the member for Mississauga—Streetsville is talking about.

Regarding the member's comments about a democratic process, in my speech I outlined in a number of different places that what we actually do in a democratic process is engage Canadians. Why do we not talk to Canadians about what they want to see regarding Senate reform? As I pointed out in my speech, there have been numerous reports between the Senate and the House about proposed Senate change and nothing has come to fruition.

I think it is time we take that question to Canadians and ask them what they want to see in their Senate.

**Mr. Randall Garrison (Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the member for Nanaimo—Cowichan for her excellent speech on this topic and especially for her emphasis on consulting Canadians. It is fairly clear the government on the other side has consulted neither Canadians nor the provinces.

Let us imagine a Canada that did not have a Senate. What does my colleague think the public's reaction would be if we went to them and said, "Let's have an extra 105 politicians, have them stay there for nine years without being voted on again and let's spend \$100 million a year?" We could ask if the public would think this would actually help solve the problems we face as a country. I would be interested to hear what the member thinks the public would think about this, if we did not have a Senate and if someone came forward to suggest we needed one.

• (1240)

**Ms. Jean Crowder:** Mr. Speaker, there have been recent polls that strongly suggest that Canadians actually want to see the Senate abolished. I would be surprised if Canadians thought that this tinkering at the margins around Senate reform is actually reflective of any significant change to the Senate.

When we talk about a democratic process, this would be a good time to engage Canadians. In this House, we have seen declining percentages of Canadians coming out to vote. I would argue that this is actually a really good time to ask Canadians how they want their governments to behave; how they want this House to be elected; what they want to do with their Senate; and whether to abolish it or some other kind of reform. It seems to me that this would be a time when we could re-engage and re-legitimize the democratic process by engaging Canadians in that very important conversation.

**Mr. Harold Albrecht (Kitchener—Conestoga, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, most of our discussion surrounding this particular speech that was made by my colleague has focused on the issue of the voluntary selection by provinces of a senator-in-waiting. We do know that the province that has implemented that has had a positive experience with it. However, in the last few minutes we have not had much focus on the issue of the term limits of senators.

*Government Orders*

It seems to me that most Canadians would find it surprising that currently a senator can be elected as early as age 30 and potentially serve there for 45 years. That is not a really good representation of Canadians. I would like my colleague to respond as to whether she thinks it would be a move in the right direction to limit a senator's term of service from a potential 45 years back to nine years.

**Ms. Jean Crowder:** Mr. Speaker, the member is absolutely correct. Most of my focus has been on the electoral process and the consultative process.

However, when it comes to term limits, other members in this House have already pointed out that just because we have a senator serving only nine years it would not prevent partisan appointments, so it would not prevent all the partisan activities that the member for Nickel Belt, for example, outlined. It would not prevent misuse of Senate resources. It would not prevent the kinds of problems that have been identified with the Senate currently.

One of the members opposite had talked about some senator who spent a significant amount of time in Mexico. There is nothing about limiting it to nine years that would prevent any of that kind of behaviour. Whether they are at it for nine years or 40-some-odd years, that is not what the issue is. The issue is, do we want to have a Senate to begin with? If we have a Senate, how do we want the senators chosen? And then, how do we prevent the kind of partisan activities and appointments that have characterized the other place since its inception?

[Translation]

**Ms. Alexandrine Latendresse (Louis-Saint-Laurent, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, since a member just asked a question about term limits and the fact that senators can now serve up to the age of 75, I would like to hear my colleague's thoughts on the fact that, at present, senators must be at least 30 years old. We are talking about better representation of the regions and of the Canadian population. How can an elected Senate represent the people if none of the elected senators is under 30 years of age?

[English]

**Ms. Jean Crowder:** Mr. Speaker, there were all kinds of anachronisms around the way senators used to get appointed. It used to be the place where one could only be appointed if one were a landholder, for example. Actually, I do not know if that rule is still in place.

When we hear the conversation about diversity in the Senate, young people are currently precluded from being appointed. I would argue that if we have a place of so-called sober second thought, young people have a lot to contribute toward that sober second thought because they are ones who are actually going to have to live out the impacts of any legislative agenda that is put in place.

It is young people, now, who are having to deal with the impacts of climate change for many decades to come. Some of us are at the other end of the spectrum. It is young people who are having to deal with things like child care. It is young people who are going to have look at the impact of pension reform in the long term for how it is going to affect their generation as they retire.

I agree with the member. It is a very important question.

• (1245)

**Mr. Blaine Calkins (Wetaskiwin, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, as this is my first speech in this Parliament since the May election, I will take this opportunity to thank all the voters of the great constituency of Wetaskiwin, Alberta, for putting their faith in me for a third consecutive term. I will commit to them that I will continue to put their interest first in all that I do as their member of Parliament and as their humble and faithful servant.

I also want to take this opportunity to thank all of the volunteers who worked so hard on the last campaign, either in the office, at the door or putting up signs in the over 15,000 square kilometres that encompasses our riding, from Rolly View to Genesee, from Buck Creek to Strachan, from Alhambra to Alix and all points in between. The job is daunting, to say the least. I am proud of each of them for exercising, not only their democratic right but for taking their responsibility so seriously that they got involved and participated more than just the act of voting.

I just returned to Ottawa last night from my home in Lacombe, Alberta, after this past weekend. I have been away for a couple of weeks. I was so glad on Thursday to step off the airplane into the fresh, crisp Alberta-evening air. Right away, my senses were overcome as I could smell the wheat and barley dust in the air. The harvest is still in full swing. It took my memory back to the times when I was a child growing up on a farm in central Alberta and the salt of the earth people with whom I grew up and was surrounded by.

My memory also went back to a time when I was a little bit younger than I am now. I am still fairly young, at least I like to think so. To brought me back to a time when one of those fields was used for more than just growing a crop in Alberta. It was one of those fields that one could see clearly from the air when landing an airplane in Calgary. Etched into that field all those years ago, some 20, if not more, years ago, were three large letters, EEE for a triple-E Senate, back when the movement in Alberta to elect our senators was in full swing. I believe that field, at that time, or still does belong to now-Senator Bert Brown. I cannot think of a better use of a field, other than growing some wheat or barley.

This is the crux of my speech today. I am so proud as an Albertan and as a Canadian that this Parliament is moving forward to reform and enhance our democracy. The change is but a small step in implementation but a leap forward in making our democracy more accountable to the people it represents.

The 2011 Speech from the Throne reaffirmed the government's Senate reform priority and that our government would reintroduce this legislation, encourage provinces and territories that have yet to do so to hold elections for Senate nominees, and to limit those term lengths that they now enjoy.

In keeping with that commitment in the throne speech, on June 21, 2011, earlier this spring, our government introduced the Senate reform act that we are debating today.



There has been some criticism that the reforms do not go far enough and do not meet all the pillars of the triple-E Senate, for example, that the reforms constitute a major change in the Senate structure, that it should be referred to the Supreme Court of Canada, or that the changes may be unconstitutional or may change the Senate for the worse in the long run. I do not believe any of those are true.

These reforms are consistent with the government's incremental approach to reform and are completely within the jurisdiction of Parliament. While the bill encourages provinces and territories to hold elections for Senate nominees, it does not change the method of selection for senators. Moreover, it does not bind the Prime Minister or the Governor General when making appointments to the Senate.

Our government is approaching Senate reform in a step-by-step fashion in order to avoid the all-or-nothing confrontational approaches that have failed in the past.

One of the important initiatives in this bill, when implemented, is that our government would be very willing to consider other worthwhile proposals. If anyone has a better idea, I am all ears.

• (1250)

The government has encouraged the provinces and territories to implement a democratic process for the selection of Senate nominees. The Senate reform act would provide a voluntary framework for provinces to implement a democratic process that enables voters to select nominees to represent them, their province and their region in the Senate.

The act would include a voluntary schedule based on Alberta's senatorial selection act, which would set out a basis for provinces to enact these democratic processes. As we said, Alberta already has established a democratic process for the selection of senators in which we have seen most recently the appointment of Senator Bert Brown in 2007.

However, it would require the Prime Minister to consider the recommended names from a list of elected Senate nominees when making or recommending Senate appointments. In Alberta, for example, there is some criticism. The *Edmonton Journal* has led the way in speaking out against our reforms by printing an op-ed by the hon. member for Saint-Laurent—Cartierville and a negative editorial. On the other hand, our former premier, Don Getty, says that the reforms do not go far enough to bring democracy to the Senate.

Despite those criticisms, much of which is hypothetical and speculative, the one thing that is standard across the board is that the status quo is no longer acceptable. Everyone agrees that it has to be reformed. We just simply may disagree right now on how to go about it.

Generally speaking, our reforms have been perceived to be balanced, moderate and reasonable. We are not going so far as to suggest that it should be abolished. I do not think the Conservatives like to tear down their house before seeing if they can fix it first. However, members of the New Democratic Party and the member for Hamilton Centre specifically, have been very vocal on that point.

### *Government Orders*

We are acting on what I think everyone agrees must happen but we need to change things up. We need to make it more democratic and accountable and that the status quo simply cannot continue. Our government received a strong mandate from Canadians to reform the Senate and to implement our Senate reform commitments. We were very clear, not only in this past election campaign but in every election campaign in which I have been involved as a Conservative candidate, that we would bring democratic reform to the Senate.

The effectiveness and legitimacy of the Senate suffers because senators have no democratic mandate from Canadians and can serve terms as long as 45 years. I have been here for almost six years and have served as an executive member of the NATO parliamentary assembly. I am an executive member of the interparliamentary union of 144 countries that get together to discuss how to enhance their parliaments and democratic processes and I am continuously amazed when parliamentarians from places like Mexico, Indonesia, Poland and even Australia are amazed that Canada does not have an elected Senate.

The Senate reform act would change that. It also would change how long senators can sit in the upper chamber. We have specifically chosen terms that are long enough to maintain the essential characteristics of the Senate as a chamber of sober second thought while still providing regular renewal in Senate membership. Limiting Senate tenure is within Parliament's exclusive constitutional authority under section 44 of the Constitution Act, 1982 and is similar to an amendment passed by the Pearson government in 1965, which also reduced the tenure of senators.

The Prime Minister has made it clear that our government is prepared to be flexible in the consideration of amendments to Senate term lengths so long as any amendment does not undermine the principle of the bill. By proposing a nine year term, our government has already demonstrated that it can be flexible in the details of the bill. However, we would not accept a length of term that was so long that it would defeat the purpose of the bill, which is to ensure that the Senate is refreshed with new ideas and perspectives on a regular and ongoing basis.

As the Prime Minister stated when he appeared before the Special Senate Committee on Senate Reform, the fact that senators can be and occasionally are appointed for terms of 15, 30 or even 45 years is just not acceptable today to the broad mainstream of the Canadian community.

Our position has been supported by many of Canada's leading constitutional authorities, as well as the Senate Special Committee on Senate Reform, but that is not what the opposition would like Canadians to believe.

• (1255)

Our minister has met with opposition critics in the House and discussed Senate reform broadly. The NDP's former leader and the member for Hamilton Centre always maintained a strict Senate abolitionist position as their preferred and ultimate goal. While they have stated publicly that some reform is better than no reform, I fully expect that the NDP will oppose the bill.

*Government Orders*

The Liberal critic, the member for Saint-Laurent—Cartierville, is highly knowledgeable on the file and has expressed specific concerns, all of which have been publicly dealt with. The Liberals are concerned that a dispute resolution mechanism between the two chambers does not exist. They claim that other conventional and constitutional tools necessary to deal with changed circumstances with Senate reform would cause numerous problems. They oppose incremental reform and argue that the provinces must be consulted and that this legislation should be referred to the Supreme Court of Canada before proceeding. They have argued and prefer longer term limits than those proposed by the government, if and when they support term limits at all.

We expect Liberal senators to oppose and obstruct the legislation and to encourage Conservative senators with reservations about the bill to speak publicly and to oppose it. Furthermore, we expect the Liberals to profess support for wholesale Senate reform in general, but opposition to incremental reform through legislation such as this bill.

We have heard the opposition ask questions about these reforms affecting people representation within the Senate chamber. However, under the current appointment system, there is no guarantee that minority groups will be properly represented in the Senate. Our government is hopeful that women and minority candidates will participate fully in any selection process by putting their names forward as candidates.

Provincial political parties could play a role in the nomination of potential Senate nominees, as they do in the nomination process for members of the legislative assembly. The government hopes that parties will encourage the participation of groups that have been traditionally under-represented in our political institutions.

The Prime Minister's prerogative to recommend qualified individuals for appointment to the Senate would not be affected by any consultation process that may be implemented. Should the Prime Minister feel that it is necessary to take steps to address an imbalance in the representation of women or minority groups in the Senate, he or she would retain the power to do so.

I will now discuss what Senate reform has done in my home province of Alberta, but I will first talk about a very interesting thing that happened in my province this past weekend.

I congratulate Alison Redford, the premier-elect and now the new leader of the Progressive Conservative Party of Alberta. She will be one of three women leading various provinces across our country in the very near future. I convey to her my congratulations and offer her goodwill as she takes on the task of taking over the helm of our province.

I also thank outgoing premier, Ed Stelmach, and his wife, Marie, for the decades of service they have given to Albertans. I wish them well as they move on to the next phase of their lives after the next provincial election.

Alberta has been ahead of the game for quite some time. We passed the senatorial selection act in 1989, an act that allows voters to select nominees through a democratic process. Under that act, the Government of Alberta submits the names of elected nominees to the federal government. The act does not require the prime minister or

the governor general to appoint the individuals selected as nominees through the process.

We have had Senate selections in 1989, 1998 and 2004. Two senators have been appointed as a result of these processes: Stan Waters in 1990 by Prime Minister Brian Mulroney, and Bert Brown in 2007 by our current Prime Minister.

In Alberta, candidates for Senate nominees can run as independents or as candidates of a registered provincial political party. Recently, the Alberta Progressive Conservatives have nominated candidates in each of these selection processes. The Liberal Party of Alberta has not had and did not have any candidates in either the 1998 or the 2004 process. The New Democratic Party of Alberta, which has stated its preference for Senate abolition, has yet to endorse a candidate for a selection process.

In past processes, candidates have also been nominated under provincial parties formed specifically to contest Senate elections. For example, the Reform Party of Alberta supported candidates in the 1989 and 1998 selections but did not run in the 2004 selection process. Stan Waters was a Reform Party of Alberta candidate in 1989 and sat as a Reform Senator when he was appointed in 1990.

● (1300)

In other cases, candidates have run under provincial party banners that have no federal equivalent. In 2004, three candidates ran under the Alberta Alliance Party. The Alberta Alliance Party changed its name to the Wildrose Alliance when it merged with the Wildrose Party in 2008. Wildrose Alliance leader Danielle Smith has indicated the party's plan to run full slate of candidates in the next senatorial selection process and has noted that the selections are one of the ways our regional issues can be most fairly represented.

The Canada West Foundation estimates that voter turnout for the 1998 process was about 30% overall. On average, voter turnout for the Senate vote was about 10% lower than ballots cast in municipal races.

In 2004 Alberta held its senatorial selection process in conjunction with the provincial general election. Previously, in 1998 and in 1989, these processes were held at the same time as general municipal elections.

Voter turnout for the 2004 senatorial selection process was nearly 44.2%. However, once rejected and spoiled ballots were considered, voter turnout for the senatorial process was closer to 35%. In comparison, voter turnout for the 2004 provincial general election was just over 44%.

I know what some rural Canadians are thinking. If Senate nominees are selected from provincial-wide constituencies, would candidates from urban centres not have an advantage over Canadians from rural areas?



I want to be very clear here. Our legislation improves the current consultation process in terms of Senate selections. Under the current method of selection, there is no guarantee that all regions in a province can be represented at the same time. However, the proposed bill empowers the provinces to implement a consultation process that will best meet the needs of its citizens. It will be up to each province to decide upon a process to ensure that all citizens in the provinces are properly represented.

The role of the Senate and the individual senators would not change as a result of this legislation. Senators will continue to play an important function in legislative review and their status will not be affected by whether they have been appointed directly or selected on the basis of popular consultation.

Similarly, the status of senators will not be affected by the type of electoral system that is used to select them. Over time, as more senators are appointed on the basis of a consultation process, it is our hope that the democratic legitimacy of the Senate as a whole will improve and that this would lay the basis for longer term future reform.

The bill does not provide funding for provincial or territorial consultation processes. Our government believes that provincial or territorial processes should be funded by provincial or territorial governments. For example, Alberta has held three consultation processes and the Government of Canada has never contributed funding. Alberta estimated that the cost of the most recent consultation process held in 2004 was approximately \$1.6 million.

Our preference is Senate reform, not Senate abolition, like some of the opposition would suggest. That is why we acted quickly in reintroducing Senate reform legislation so the Senate would better reflect the values of Canada and Canadians in the 21st century.

On the equal part of the triple-E, we need more seats for the west. Across the country, there may be varying viewpoints, opinions and ideas on what to do with the Senate. These are all things for legitimate debate, but most important is the status quo. What we are doing today is simply no longer palatable to the Canadian public.

That is why we are proceeding with Senate reform that is reasonable and within the constitutional authority of Parliament. The federal government has to take a look at the processes that have worked for our provincial colleagues.

Alberta is firmly committed to an elected Senate and to Senate reform. Not only that, but Alberta has proven that democratic processes are feasible and possible, holding its first selections more than 20 years ago.

We in this party encourage all provinces to follow Alberta's lead and start electing their Senate representatives.

**Mr. Dennis Bevington (Western Arctic, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his presentation on a variety of issues surrounding Senate reform, including the decoration on his wheat fields, which I thought was quite entertaining.

He spoke about public support for this. In fact, the public support for a referendum on the Senate is growing. An Angus Reid survey from 2011 shows that 71% of Canadians are in favour of holding a

referendum to decide the future of the Senate and 36% of Canadians support the abolition of the Senate, up from 25% one year earlier.

In the spirit of democracy, would it not be incumbent upon the government to determine what Canadians think is a good plan of attack for dealing with the Senate? Would it not be a good idea to open it up for a much wider ranging discussion that would come with a referendum? Would that not make more sense than putting forward a bill that is likely to fail anyhow?

• (1305)

**Mr. Blaine Calkins:** Mr. Speaker, I am not sure where the hon. colleague was when we had referenda on these mixed in with other issues back when we had the Charlottetown accord and the Meech Lake accord. Those were failed processes. Also I do not share his view that the bill will not pass this chamber. I do not know why he wants to muddy this issue. It is very clear, and we agree, that Canadians want change. The status quo is no longer acceptable.

Conservatives believe we should fix the house before we tear it down. There is something here we are salvaging. Regional interests need to be taken into consideration. The Senate is there to do just that. This House, if we get future bills passed, will more accurately reflect representation by population. Our country is too large and vast, both in its ethnicity and culture and in its space. We have five easily discernible regions: the Arctic; the West; Ontario; Quebec; and the Atlantic provinces. They all need to have some say and oversight and someone here in Ottawa looking out for the broader interests of those regions and those provinces. It is folly to throw that institution away on a whim from the NDP.

**Hon. Stéphane Dion (Saint-Laurent—Cartierville, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague and join him in congratulating the new Premier of Alberta.

[Translation]

Since she is bilingual, I am pleased to congratulate her in French.

[English]

I thank him for taking the time to list the criticisms of this bill that have been addressed, including by the former premier of his province, Don Getty.

Although my colleague said that Mr. Getty's criticism is speculative, it is not. It is arithmetic. Today Alberta has only six senators. We have provinces four to five times less populated that have 10 senators. It is a problem but it is not so huge because the Senate is playing its role with reservation.

Since 1945, the Senate has only blocked seven bills. If everyone in the Senate is elected, then it would be a part of daily life for the Senate to stop the House and the House to stop the Senate and six Albertans would have a voice on that. It would be grossly under-represented for Alberta. I question why he is hurting his province this way.

**Mr. Blaine Calkins:** Mr. Speaker, I am not hurting my province at all. Albertans have always done their fair part in this confederation and they always will continue to do so. Six Alberta senators is what we constitutionally agreed to as part of this confederation.

*Government Orders*

They may want to go back and open up the Constitution. They have argued that is the case. However, everybody knows it is simply not possible. There is no current support across our country to have seven of ten provinces holding at least 50% of the population to have a one-off constitutional amendment. Unless the member knows something which I do not know, which I doubt on this case, if he has names and agreements of premiers and so on to go forward with this, then by all means bring it before the House and let us have a look at it. I said in my speech that we would take a look at the options that are available to us.

However, I am glad he is sticking up for Alberta. When the future legislation comes to increase the number of seats in the House so we have democratic representation by population, I know my colleague will stand with me in supporting Alberta's increase in seats in the House of Commons.

**Mr. James Bezan (Selkirk—Interlake, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, my friend from Wetaskiwin's position on the Senate reform was very well thought out and well articulated.

I want to add my voice to the support for Bill C-7. This is an important bill and I cannot believe the suggestions coming from New Democrats that this is not fixing democracy. They do not want to have new democracy within the Senate. They talk about having proportional representation. Do members know how proportional representation works?

I know my friend from Wetaskiwin will be able to tell us how proportional representation works because of his experience with other parliaments around the world that have proportional representation. The list is developed through a partisan manner and the people who come into the chamber come off a partisan list. The New Democrats think there is too much patronage and partisanship happening in the Senate, which we want to fix, but they want to bring that type of patronage into the House of Commons through proportional representation.

It is the worst thing that could happen to democracy and I want my friend from Wetaskiwin to talk about that.

• (1310)

**Mr. Blaine Calkins:** Mr. Speaker, I might be a little partisan in my remarks here. It has happened from time to time.

Any time we have discussions about democracy, there are certain forces in this world that are always claiming they are acting in the best interest of the people, for the people, but the reality is it is just a smokescreen. We only have to ask the Hugo Chavezs of the world. What happens when totalitarian leftists or extremists on either side get into power? They circumvent all the processes that they have to in order to seize and hold power indefinitely.

Our first-past-the-post system is a tried and tested method of democracy. We have inherited this from our parent countries when we became our own country. This is something that works and it works in the House. It will work in the upper chamber as well.

We can elect people who belong to provincial parties, or people with affiliations to federal parties, or people with no affiliation to any political party at all. What a novel concept. How many members of Parliament have heard complaints from their constituents in that they do not really like the party but they vote for the person?

Now we have an opportunity through this legislation to elect an individual with no party affiliation at all to represent the interest of a province in the upper chamber. However, the New Democrats say that this is not good enough for them.

**Mr. Randall Garrison (Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, does the hon. member seriously think his constituents would like the idea of adding 105 politicians to our system if we did not already have a Senate now? Would they really think it would solve their problems? Would they think that spending \$109 million or \$107 million a year would actually do anything to solve the problems they are worried about in their daily lives? I do not think so.

The second part of my question is on accountability. In a nine-year term where people are not re-elected, how is there any accountability for that person at all in the system being proposed?

**Mr. Blaine Calkins:** Mr. Speaker, I do not have to doubt too much what the constituents in the riding of Wetaskiwin are thinking. They sent me here with a fairly solid mandate to represent their interests. In respect to the member's question though, yes, I hear some folks say that abolition is certainly an option, but that is only if we cannot get the democratic reform that they are seeking.

I made it very clear in my speech. Albertans like Bert Brown in the Senate. They liked Stan Waters before him. Like all of those who have ran and let their names stand for Senate elections in Alberta three different times, and they are going to do it again, it is very clear what Alberta's position is. We want democracy in the Senate. We do not want to wipe out democracy. We love democracy in Alberta. We love electing people based on their merits, which is why we elect the Alison Redfords to be our premier, the Naheed Nenshis and Stephen Mandels to be our mayors. We like having those democratic choices.

In Alberta we believe that people with merit should be representing Alberta's provincial and regional interests in Ottawa, which is why they send virtually a full slate of Conservatives to Ottawa. They know those interests will be best represented that way.

**Mr. Dean Del Mastro (Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister and to the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, what a rare honour it is to follow the very astute comments by the member for Wetaskiwin. Did he not speak well? He spoke well in defending democracy, pushing toward updates and reasonable changes to our democracy.



Our party has been very clear that the economy and job creation are top priorities. Those are the priorities of the Conservative government. That is why we have taken Canada's economic action plan to the next step. That is why we unveiled advantage Canada way back in 2007 and started working on a framework and foundation that would guide Canada not just through good times but through tough times. Has that plan not worked well? That does not mean we do not continue to work toward improving this place. It does not mean we do not continue to work at making our streets and communities safer and that we do not try in every way possible to make Canada an even greater nation than it is today.

I am honoured to represent the electric city of Peterborough, Ontario and the great hard-working people of Peterborough. In fact, you, Mr. Speaker, represent the riding adjacent to mine. We share one of the most beautiful regions in the country. The Kawartha Lakes region is in the name of your riding, Mr. Speaker, but I have most of it in my back yard. However, we are not going to fight over that. The bottom line is we are very privileged to represent one of the truly great regions within Canada.

When I talk to people in my riding, they understand that the Senate needs to be changed, that it needs to be reformed and that we should constantly work to improve democracy in this country. One thing is clear. If we go back to 1867 and the foundation of this country, the Senate was prescribed in a given fashion. However, the country has matured. It has become a more mature democracy. We have seen reforms in many ways. In fact, we have seen Canada grow up. I would argue it is an experiment that continues to evolve, to become stronger and even more united. In fact, I would argue patriotism in this country and the identity behind the Canadian flag has never been more clear, passionate or stronger than it is today.

In May our government received a mandate; a strong, stable, national Conservative government was elected on May 2. It is a majority government, as the member for Kitchener—Conestoga correctly pointed out. One of the things we made very clear in the election campaign was that we would continue to fight for reform of the Senate.

New Democrats had a very confusing policy on the Senate. They said that they would come to Ottawa and fight for Senate abolition, but they cannot do that in isolation. They know that requires the agreement of the provinces. One of the key provinces that has voiced concerns over that is the province of Quebec. When the New Democrats take their Senate abolition message back to Quebec, I wonder what they are hearing from the provincial government and constituents in Quebec. I wonder what they are hearing because that is not what we are hearing. In fact, we are hearing that the Senate should be reformed, not abolished.

Our government has been clear about our commitment to bring reform to the Senate chamber. We pledged to do this and we are following through.

We believe the Senate can play an important role in our parliamentary system. It reviews statutes and legislation. It serves to represent regional and minority interests. It provides research and thoughtful recommendations to the members of the House. It can be a place where a broader range of experience and expertise can be brought to bear on the issues facing our country.

### *Government Orders*

I heard a member point out that one cannot assume a position in the Senate until the age of 30 and felt that was discriminatory. I do not believe that is discriminatory when we look at the role the Senate plays. I was elected, I thought as quite a young person, at the age of 35, but I brought a considerable amount of experience, small business experience, charitable experience and experience on the farm growing up. I had a resumé of life experience that I could bring to bear.

• (1315)

I think the younger that members are, regardless of how intelligent or well intentioned they are, it is the life experiences they bring with them to Parliament, whether it is here in the House of Commons or in the Senate chamber, that allows them to be truly representative of a broader scope of people, but also to fully understand and comprehend the impact of the decisions that are made here in Parliament.

Unfortunately, the contributions of our Senate are overshadowed by the fact that senators are selected and appointed without a democratic mandate from Canadians. Their effectiveness and legitimacy suffer because they have no democratic mandate and they can serve as long as 45 years.

As I said, the Senate does good work. One of the most transformative and important reports to come out of the Senate in a very long time is the "Out of the Shadows at Last" report by Senator Keon and Senator Kirby, two very outstanding Canadians who worked very hard to bring forward their study on mental health and mental illness. From that our government acted. We put together a Canadian mental health strategy that is now working to organize and build capacity in that regard here in Canada. That is the kind of good work and the kind of solid report we see come out of the Senate. That is why there is value in what the Senate does.

Much of that work is overshadowed because the Senate is still stuck in 1867. Our government does not believe the current situation is acceptable in a modern representative democracy and neither do Canadians, certainly not the people of Peterborough.

Our government has long believed the Senate status quo is unacceptable and that it must change in order to reach its full potential as a democratic institution and a more legitimate chamber of this Parliament. The alternative is status quo. Canadians are with us in saying no to the status quo.

With the introduction of the Senate reform bill, our government is responding to the concerns of Canadians who made it clear that the status quo is simply not acceptable. If we are to begin the journey toward reform, we must do what we can within the scope of Parliament's authority.

*Government Orders*

Our government believes that Senate reform is needed now. We are committed to pursuing a practical and reasonable approach to reform that we believe will help restore effectiveness and legitimacy in the Senate. Canadians do not want a long drawn-out constitutional battle, as we have been down that road, especially when, as I said at the start of this speech, Parliament needs to focus on the well-being of the Canadian economy and on job creation. It does not mean that Parliament should not act, but a long drawn-out constitutional battle is not in our interest, nor in the provinces' interest, nor in the interest of any Canadians. These battles would detract from the government's focus in all areas.

Achieving the necessary level of provincial support for particular fundamental reforms is complex and lengthy with no particular guarantee of success. That is why we are moving forward with the Senate reform bill.

Through this bill, our government is taking immediate and concrete action to fulfill our commitment to Canadians to increase the effectiveness and legitimacy of the upper chamber and to work co-operatively with the provinces and territories.

The bill provides a suggested framework for the provinces and territories that wish to establish democratic consultation processes to give Canadians a say in who represents them.

I have often said it is a real shame that many Canadians can name their member of Parliament, they can name other members of Parliament, they can name ministers and opposition critics, but many Canadians cannot name the senators who represent their province or any province. That points to a fundamental flaw in the current system. They are the people who are supposed to represent the regions, including Nickel Belt, for example.

The member who is arguing for abolition as I am speaking should know that the people from Nickel Belt can have representation in the Senate; they can have a say in who represents them in the Senate. It is important regional representation for northern Ontario. I hear from people in the north all the time that they feel they are under-represented in this place, that they are under-represented at the provincial level. The regional representation in the Senate can give them a voice, and they should have a say in who represents them there.

We have consistently encouraged provinces and territories to implement a democratic process for the selection of Senate nominees. The Senate reform bill gives clarity to our flexible approach.

• (1320)

The bill requires the Prime Minister to consider the names selected from democratic processes when making recommendations on appointments. It does not bind the Prime Minister or the Governor General when making Senate appointments, nor does it change the method of selection for senators.

The bill also contains a voluntary framework for provinces and territories to use as a basis for developing a democratic selection process to consult voters on the preferences for Senate nominees based on Alberta's senatorial selection act.

The framework is meant to facilitate development of provincial or territorial legislation. This is a co-operative venture. The provinces and territories can adapt the framework that best suits the needs of their unique circumstances. Built-in flexibility will further encourage provinces to provide a democratic consultation process to give greater voice to their citizens and the provinces in the Senate.

Our proposed approach has already been successful. In 2007 the Prime Minister recommended the appointment of Bert Brown to the Senate. He was chosen by Alberta voters in 2004, and I might add, ignored by the Liberal government that oversaw the selection process here in Ottawa. We thank Senator Brown for his tireless work for reform both inside and outside the Senate.

Alberta is not the only province, however, that has taken steps to facilitate this reform. In 2009 Saskatchewan passed its Senate nominee election act. In British Columbia the premier's parliamentary secretary has introduced a similar bill. Just on Saturday, October 1, Premier Alward of New Brunswick announced his government's support for our approach. We look forward to seeing New Brunswick take the steps toward Senate reform.

It is building. Provinces are taking up the challenge of improving our democracy. It is exciting. We encourage our colleagues in all provincial and territorial legislatures and assemblies to consider supporting and moving forward with similar initiatives.

In addition to encouraging the implementation of the democratic selection process for Senate nominees, the act would also limit Senate terms which can span several decades under the current rules. In fact, a term could be up to 45 years under the current rules. Polls have consistently shown that over 70% of Canadians support limiting senators' terms. This is quite different from some of the speeches we have heard in the Senate. I listened when senators who have served for decades reach the age of 75 and point out there is no legitimate reason for them to have to bow out from the job.

But there is a legitimate reason. I would hope that every member in the House would understand that it is not enough simply to be elected; it is not enough simply to be here. People have to contribute. They have to bring fresh ideas to the table. New people have to be given a chance to bring in new ideas. More people have to be given an opportunity to contribute toward this great country. That is one of the reasons term limits are so important.

The nine-year term would also apply to all senators appointed after October 2008, up to royal assent. The nine-year clock for those senators would start when this bill receives royal assent. The Senate reform act would keep the mandatory retirement age for senators in place. In 1965, Parliament introduced mandatory retirement at age 75 for senators. Prior to that, senators were appointed for life. This clearly demonstrates Parliament's authority to put these laws in place. In 2007 the Senate Standing Committee on Legal and Constitutional Affairs recommended that the mandatory retirement age of 75 be maintained while examining a previous Senate term limits bill.



*Government Orders*

Some opposition members argue that the bill presents a fundamental constitutional change requiring the support of the provinces. Personally I think they are entirely wrong, as do many others, including the provinces that are signing onto the bill and putting in place mechanisms to elect senators.

The Constitution also very clearly sets out those types of changes to the Senate that require some level of provincial consent. Our government has been careful to ensure that our approach to Senate reform falls within Parliament's constitutional jurisdiction.

I have listened to the speeches and questions from the opposition members and I have to say that they are missing the point. Our goal is to begin the reform process. We want to be as constructive as we can while ensuring that we move this place forward.

• (1325)

In contrast to the position of other parties, it is clear that our government's approach is the practical and reasonable way forward. It is the approach that can truly achieve results on behalf of every single Canadian in this country.

In fact, the stated positions of the opposition parties are essentially arguments in favour of the status quo. This is what is so dishonest about their approach. They understand full well that standing in this place and arguing anything other than this bill is in fact an argument for the status quo. It is an argument for the Senate to stay stuck in 1867. Their proposals would not achieve anything, and we would have no reform at all. That is not acceptable to Canadians.

The NDP, as I have said previously, would try to abolish the Senate. Canadians just do not support that kind of radical and fundamental change. There is no wide agreement among the provinces for that proposal. As I said earlier, I encourage the Quebec members to go to the National Assembly in Quebec City and see how much support they get for that position.

The position of the Liberal Party, on the other hand, has been to advocate for a process, not a result. How Liberal.

Perhaps we could have a summit. After the summit, we could have round tables. After the round tables, we could go to telephone consultation. After that, maybe we could do a mail-in campaign, and maybe sometime, a decade or two down the road, the Liberal Party might be prepared to act; we are not sure.

The Liberals do not support the reform of the Senate. That is the bottom line. The Liberals' 13-year record of inaction demonstrates their opposition. They have been clear about this, yet their suggestion is to open up the Constitution and begin a process that we know would end in bitter, drawn-out national conflict without Senate reforms being achieved.

We have seen how the Liberal Party responds whenever the Constitution is opened. It is simply to be contrarian. When we were seeking to bring Quebec into the Constitution, for example, when former Prime Minister Mulroney entered into constitutional reform, we know it was the Liberal Party that fought against it. We know it was the Liberal Party that was trying to tear down that House that would have, in my mind and in the minds of many others, put an end to the question of Canada being a country that spans from sea to sea to sea.

The Liberal approach is a recipe for accomplishing absolutely nothing while dragging us into a constitutional quagmire at a time when the government, the Liberal party, the New Democratic Party and all their members should be focused on the economy and jobs.

In conclusion, our government is dedicated to reforming the Senate so that it better reflects the values of hard-working Canadians across the country.

My constituents tell me that they want change. I believe that the time for change in the Senate has come. With the Senate reform act, our government is presenting modest but important and attainable changes that would improve the Senate by providing it with greater legitimacy in the eyes of Canadians.

Every member in this House has the opportunity to do something truly historic, something fundamental to our democratic process. They have the opportunity to bring the Senate, even if just marginally, into the 21st century to begin the process of reform.

We see what happens when we introduce democracy into the parliamentary system or into the governing systems of countries. It becomes infectious. People demand more democracy. They want even greater participation in their political process.

Every member in this House has the opportunity to do something historic, to give something to their constituents that they have never had before: a say in who represents them.

Can members imagine that in the 21st century in Canada we have a political body structured such that the people we all represent have no say in who represents them?

Let us do something historic. Let us support this bill. Let us move forward. Let us reform the Senate. Let us make Canada an even stronger and better country than it is today.

That is the charge I put to every member of this House.

• (1330)

**Mr. Dennis Bevington (Western Arctic, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I enjoyed the hon. member's grand flourish at the end, although it seemed a bit inappropriate since what the bill would do is give the Prime Minister the option that he has right now. He can, right now, agree to appoint a senator elected from a provincial legislature or from the workings of a provincial election. He can do that right now.

If we were to pass the bill, the Prime Minister would not be required to appoint those elected. He can appoint whomever he feels like appointing. What would we be adding to Canadians? We would not have very much at all in that regard.

Would the hon. member explain exactly what he meant when he said this would be a grand change for Canadians?

*Government Orders*

● (1335)

**Mr. Dean Del Mastro:** Mr. Speaker, I would point out to the member that he has a historic opportunity on behalf of the citizens of Western Arctic. I would also remind the member that when the Prime Minister in this Conservative Party of Canada had an opportunity to nominate someone who had gone through that process, our Prime Minister did just that. We are very proud of him for doing so, because he followed the democratic will of the people of Alberta. Our Prime Minister will follow the democratic will of the people across Canada.

We would be putting in place a formal understanding between the Prime Minister and the people of Canada that if they take part in the democratic process and make their voices heard by casting their ballots, that person would be considered by the Prime Minister, and I would say that any Prime Minister who thwarts the democratic will of the people would not be the Prime Minister for very long.

However, it will not be this Prime Minister. This Prime Minister has already indicated and clearly demonstrated that he will follow the democratic will of the people of this country when it comes to the Senate. That is why I believe that the Prime Minister will be the Prime Minister for a very long time.

**Hon. Stéphane Dion (Saint-Laurent—Cartierville, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the member must keep in mind my suggestion that an old law of public policy says that the problems we have today are often the result of the institutional reforms of yesterday. I want to point out three problems with the bill that may create a lot of problems in the future.

The first is corporate donations. The Prime Minister created a law that banished corporate donations. However, they would be back with a vengeance with the passage of the bill because many provinces have weak or no regulations regarding corporate donations.

Second, it is very likely that the bill is unconstitutional. I understand that the member disagrees, but the list of experts saying the opposite is quite long. Premier Charest said he would go to court to fight the bill. In order to avoid this constitutional chaos, why not ask the Supreme Court for its view on the bill? It would be responsible to do so.

Finally, there is no constitutional mechanism to solve any disagreement between the two elected chambers. If the Senate were to be elected, the likelihood that the Senate would be of a different view than the House would be very high. What democracy would accept being in a situation in which there are no constitutional mechanisms to solve disagreements between the two chambers?

These are three clear questions. I would like my colleague to answer each of them.

**Mr. Dean Del Mastro:** Mr. Speaker, the member brings forward a number of very good concerns that I think are important and valid.

On his first question with respect to banishing corporate and union donations, we made that very clear in the Accountability Act.

Now, the NDP does not feel that it should follow it. We know the NDP accepted tens of thousands of dollars of illegal donations at its most recent party convention in June in Vancouver. That is an issue

for the Chief Electoral Officer, and it is one we expect him to follow up on.

However, it is important, because in doing so, we have returned politics to the people. We have empowered the people by making sure that those with deep pockets cannot simply buy elections or buy the electoral process.

I think every province should have similar legislation. They should also ban third party advertising. If we look at what is going on in the province of Ontario right now, as far as I am concerned, that is not putting people first; it is in fact drowning out the voices of the people, and it is unacceptable.

With respect to the constitutionality of the bill, we have sought opinion and we believe it is well within the authority of Parliament to move forward with the bill.

I believe the member's last question had to do with sending the bill to the Supreme Court. We have no interest in being in a long-drawn-out constitutional battle. We do not think that is productive. We think bringing democracy to the Senate chamber is what Canadians want and deserve.

**Mr. Ron Cannan (Kelowna—Lake Country, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I thank my hon. colleague for his excellent speech and for his hard work for his colleagues and constituents in Peterborough.

My question is specifically on the timeframe.

I represent wonderful constituents in Kelowna—Lake Country. We had a Liberal senator, Ross Fitzpatrick, who served our community very well. I worked nine years on city council before being elected three times to the House. I know being partisan was mentioned, and it was mentioned that we can elect a senator who does not necessarily have a political affiliation. In this case, Mr. Fitzpatrick was appointed by the Liberal Prime Minister at the time.

Mr. Fitzpatrick had to retire at the age of 75. I hear from constituents that 15, 30 or 45 years seems like a long time for somebody to have that job without either having to be elected the first time or being accountable.

My question to my colleague is this: why is a nine-year term proposed? What is significant about nine years?

● (1340)

**Mr. Dean Del Mastro:** Mr. Speaker, the establishment of the term limit at nine years is in response to the concerns that were brought forward by some of the members in the opposition and some of the members of the public. They indicated that anything shorter would allow a government, in two majority mandates, to be able to dictate all of the membership of the Senate. Putting in place a nine-year term limit would be longer than two terms of Parliament. It was a fair compromise that we sought.

I go back to the argument. The hon. member represents, by the way, one of the most beautiful parts of this country. It is very close to being as beautiful as the Kawartha Lakes. In fact, some folks from there might even be deceived into believing it is more beautiful, but I will not enter into that debate.



However, I can say very clearly that the hon. member is representing his constituents and the overwhelming majority of Canadians in his support for a term limit on senators that is not up to 45 years.

**Mr. Kennedy Stewart (Burnaby—Douglas, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I am very concerned about the bill.

First, it presents flimsy and minor changes designed to pander to a Conservative base. I am concerned that it will not have any real impact, and that if it does have any impact, as my colleague has pointed out, it is bound to be negative. Tie-ups between the House of Commons and the Senate are something we can ill afford at this time.

Second, it continues the trend of offloading to the provinces. There does not seem to be any provision in the bill to help provinces pay for elections. Just as in Bill C-10, there are basically no provisions to help provinces to absorb these additional costs that are being lowered onto them by the federal government.

Could the member opposite tell me how much it will cost British Columbians to hold these kinds of mostly meaningless elections?

**Mr. Dean Del Mastro:** Mr. Speaker, it shocks me that the member is concerned about the cost of democracy.

What is the cost of not having democracy? What is the cost of having a completely and entirely appointed body that may not represent the views of the people of British Columbia? I would argue that the cost is a democracy stuck some 143 or 145 years in the past.

The member should take a second look at the bill. As I said previously, the member has the opportunity to do something historic: to start Canada down the road toward building a democratic chamber in the Senate and to start down the road of establishing a reasonable Senate term limit.

Is the member aware that there are people currently serving in the Senate who were appointed by Pierre Trudeau? Is he aware of that? Is the member aware of what their contributions may or may not have been, or whether anyone in their respective provinces supported those senators' appointments to begin with?

I am aware that most of the people in my riding cannot name a single senator. Some of them might be able to name two or three, but virtually none of them can name a senator who represents them. Under a democratic body, that would change.

**Mr. Claude Gravelle (Nickel Belt, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, since this is my first speech in the House of Commons in the 41st Parliament, I would like to thank the people of Nickel Belt for returning me to this House of Commons. I am grateful to the people from as far west as Foleyet, to the east of Garden Village, from the south in Killarney, and to the north of Capreol and River Valley, for returning me to this House.

One of their reasons for returning me to this House of Commons is due to the fine work that my staff is doing in Nickel Belt. I would like to thank them in this House, including Carmen McMurray in Nickel Belt and Val Caron, Ghislaine Millette in Val Caron, and Mona Noël and Don Pitre in Sturgeon Falls. I would like to thank them for the fine work they are doing.

### *Government Orders*

Some of the reasons why we were re-elected to this House of Commons are because the people of Nickel Belt are more concerned about unemployment, health care, education and about their mothers, fathers and grandfathers. They are not too concerned about Senate reform. They are concerned about the things that affect them and Senate reform certainly does not affect them.

I am happy to rise in the House today to speak about the important principles of democratic reform and accountability.

I know the citizens of my riding of Nickel Belt want an electoral system where people are made to feel their vote counts. They want to feel good about government again, to see it as truly representative of them, and to feel they have a choice.

Five years ago, our Prime Minister was opposition leader. He recognized how wrong the unelected Senate was. He called it unfair and undemocratic. He called an appointed Senate a relic of the 19th century. Then, as opposition leader, he clearly did not like how the Prime Minister held a virtual free hand in the selection of senators and he made a promise that, as Prime Minister he would not name appointed people to the Senate. Sadly, we have seen another broken promise. Instead of fixing the problem with the Senate, the Conservative government has made the problem worse.

Consider the evidence. The Prime Minister now holds the all-time record for appointing the largest number of senators in one day. He has appointed Conservative Party faithful, spin doctors, fundraisers and insiders, his former Conservative Party president, his former national campaign director, and several defeated Conservative candidates. What more evidence do we need than seeing the architect of the Conservative notorious in and out scheme currently sitting in the Senate? Unnecessary Conservative senators spend their time voting down laws passed by elected members of the House of Commons, while burning through taxpayers' dollars to travel the country fundraising for the Conservative Party of Canada. Talk about doing politics differently; it is more of the same old, same old as we saw with the previous Liberal government.

Last fall, we watched in shame as the Conservative-dominated Senate was used to veto legislation that the Prime Minister simply did not like. The Climate Change Accountability Act, introduced by my colleague from northern Ontario, the hon. member for Thunder Bay—Superior North, was passed twice in a minority Parliament. Elected members representing Canadians passed the bill. A majority of elected MPs supported that legislation twice. Tragically, on November 16, 2010, the Senate, with its Conservative appointees, defeated Bill C-311 on second reading. There was no community discussion in the Senate and no witnesses. It was killed by unelected friends of the Prime Minister.

*Government Orders*

● (1345)

Unfortunately, the government's legislation related to the Senate is not about real democratic reform or delivering on commitments of accountability. New Democrats are talking about real democratic reform. We are calling for the abolition of the Senate. Canadians have had enough. The Senate has to go. Most Canadians would not miss it. Recent polling shows that only 18% approve of the actions of the Senate. Unfortunately, today's senators are too often partisan, working for their parties while being paid with public money. No sober second thought can come from unelected appointees with such obvious conflicts of interest.

Then there is the waste of money in the unelected Senate because Canadians are paying more and more for a discredited institution that does less and less at a time when people are dealing with slow economic recovery and the Conservative government is contemplating billions in cutbacks. Maintaining the Senate costs Canadians around \$19 million a year. While folks are looking for jobs, trying to make ends meet when their EI runs out and scraping by on pensions that do not even cover basic necessities, senators are earning \$132,000 a year for a three-day work week. Travel and expenses for senators cost \$859,000 a year for an institution that will not play any relevant role in the lives of most Canadians.

I can think of a lot of things that matter to people, like creating family-supporting jobs, improving public health care, and building a decent future for our kids. Lining the pockets of party insiders probably is not high on anyone's list. I repeat that New Democrats want the Senate abolished. That has been the position of the New Democratic Party and its predecessors since 1930, and we are not alone.

● (1350)

*[Translation]*

The Premier of Ontario, Dalton McGuinty, and the Premier of Nova Scotia, Darrell Dexter, have publicly called for the Senate to be abolished. The Premier of British Columbia, Christy Clark, has said she does not think it serves a useful purpose within Confederation. Manitoba also maintains its position in favour of abolishing the Senate. Quebec has called this bill unconstitutional. The provincial government has said it would appeal the matter in court if this bill passes without prior consultation with the provinces.

*[English]*

We know real democratic reform is not achieved by tinkering with how senators are appointed or chosen from the provinces. We will need to introduce fair voting and proportional representation where the franchise of every voter is respected. We are calling on government to hold a referendum asking the Canadian public whether they support abolishing the Senate.

Today, I am asking the Prime Minister to start with two modest but vital first steps. First, I am asking the Prime Minister to stop appointing failed candidates and party insiders to the Senate. I am asking him to reach out to Canadians by making that a firm commitment.

Second, I am asking the Prime Minister to work with me to ensure all senators are banned from fundraising for political parties. No sober second thought can come from unelected appointees with such

an august conflict of interest. It makes a joke of our democratic system, and it is not fair to Canadians.

In the long run, New Democrats remain firmly committed to following other modern democracies, as well as Canada's provinces, by abolishing the upper house and continuing to call for a pan-Canadian referendum to allow Canadians to provide a mandate on how to proceed.

We, as New Democrats, want Canadians to feel good about government again, to see it as the embodiment of their collective capacities as citizens, and to feel they have a voice. Let our elected members of Parliament, and only our elected MPs, speak on behalf of Canadians.

Second, let us stop wasting money on the undemocratic parts of our country that are not benefiting Canadians.

I want to bring out some key facts on this Senate reform. All provincial Senates were abolished by 1960, and provinces have continued to function properly. For those from the opposition who think we cannot work without a Senate, the proof is in the pudding. The provinces got rid of all Senates in 1968, and they are still functioning.

Public support for a referendum on the Senate is growing. An Angus Reid survey from July 2011 showed that 71% of Canadians were in favour of holding a referendum to decide the future of the Senate; and 36% of Canadians supported abolishing the Senate, up from 25% one year earlier.

If we really want to hear what Canadians have to say about the Senate, maybe we should have a referendum and let Canadians tell us what they want. With this Angus Reid survey, we know what Canadians want. They want the Senate abolished.

The Conservatives have said that they do not want to tear the other place down, they want to rebuild it. They are accusing us of wanting to tear the other place down. There have been 13 attempts to reform the Senate since the 1900s, 13 times Canadians wanted to remodel the Senate and failed every time. We are not going to accomplish anything this time either.

The government has been all over the map when it comes to Senate reform. A previous Conservative bill called for a federally regulated electoral process, while another bill called for eight year term limits.

The Conservatives have not properly consulted with the provinces about whether or not they agree with the content of this bill. When this bill was first introduced in June 2011, Conservative senators, even those appointed by the Prime Minister, pushed back against any plan for Senate term limits.



Senators will remain unaccountable to the Canadian people by only being allowed by law to serve one term as senators. They will never have to face the public to account for the promises they made to get elected or the decisions they made in the previous nine years, and they will get a pension when they leave office.

The safest, small c conservative approach to the Senate is to abolish it. We know how the House of Commons works, but we have no idea what will happen with an elected Senate.

• (1355)

The Prime Minister has called the Senate a relic of the 19th century. In 2006, the Conservative Party platform stated:

The Conservatives...believe that the current Senate must be either reformed or abolished. An unelected Senate should not be able to block the will of the elected House in the 21st century.

That is exactly what happened to Bill C-311.

The government has used the Senate as a dumping ground for party operatives and fundraisers who are using public money to campaign for the Conservatives. We are seeing that right now with the provincial elections going on across the country. We are seeing senators going from province to province and riding to riding campaigning for the Conservatives at a cost to public money.

The Prime Minister has used the unaccountable and undemocratic Senate to kill legislation that had been passed by the House of Commons twice. As I mentioned previously, Bill C-311 and, this past spring, killing Bill C-393, generic drugs to Africa.

We have Alberta senator, Bert Brown, whose name has been mentioned quite often by Conservative members today making him the god from Alberta. Bert Brown made it very clear in his letter to the Senate dated June 15, when he stated:

...our loyalty is to the man who brought us here, the man who has wanted Senate reform since he entered politics....

It was not to their regions or constituents.

What a shame that an appointed senator would say something like that. He is not there to represent the regions or his constituents. Who is he there to represent if he is not there to represent Canadians? It is a shame.

• (1400)

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Barry Devolin):** Order, please. My apologies to the hon. member but I must interrupt him at this time. The hon. member for Nickel Belt will have four minutes remaining when the House returns to this matter.

## STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

[English]

### NATIONAL SENIORS DAY

**Mr. Brad Butt (Mississauga—Streetsville, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, on Saturday, we celebrated the first National Seniors Day in Canada.

Like many members of this House, I was pleased to host a Coffee and Tea with the MP event at the Meadowvale Community Centre for seniors in my riding. Representatives of both the River Grove

### Statements by Members

and Meadowvale seniors' social clubs were there sharing their stories of the very important programs and services they provide in our community. These clubs are designed to keep seniors active and provide support services to them.

Our government continues to invest in our seniors. We have recently brought in the largest increase to the guaranteed income supplement in 25 years. We brought in income splitting for pensioners and have made a large increase in funding to the new horizons for seniors program.

I am proud to be part of a government that puts seniors first.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

### SENIORS

**Ms. Lysane Blanchette-Lamothe (Pierrefonds—Dollard, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, October 1 was International Day of Older Persons, as well as National Seniors Day in Canada.

On this occasion, I would like to commend the work of municipalities, community organizations, volunteers and all other institutions that work with and for seniors.

Elder abuse, financial insecurity and poverty, affordable and adapted housing, home care and support for caregivers: indeed, there is still a lot to be done.

The percentage of seniors will increase considerably in Canada in the coming years. What is in store for them? What will be their quality of life? It is high time to take a more serious look at these questions.

National Seniors Day in Canada is also an occasion to point out the important contribution seniors make to our society. Together, we must ensure that seniors have the place they deserve in our country.

\* \* \*

[English]

### HUMAN TRAFFICKING

**Mr. Terence Young (Oakville, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I stand to recognize the work of 27-year-old Shae Invidiata from my riding of Oakville. Shae has worked tirelessly, both in Canada and abroad, to raise awareness and fight the practice of human sex trafficking.

At present, there are more than 27 million people enslaved by human trafficking worldwide; 80% are women and children, of which 70% are trapped within the sex trade. The average age of a girl in this dark situation is just 13 years old.

Shae Invidiata has taken action and has helped to raise over \$25,000 through public speaking and events, such as the annual Freedom Walk in Toronto, to fight this abhorrent practice. She is also the founder of Free-Them, a not-for-profit organization that partners with organizations and businesses to fight human trafficking all over the world.

### *Statements by Members*

This dedicated young woman is committed to raising awareness and supporting the fight against global human trafficking.

I ask the House to join me in recognizing and congratulating the hard work of this remarkable young woman who is leading others of all ages to help expose and eliminate human trafficking.

\* \* \*

### NATIONAL SENIORS DAY

**Hon. Judy Sgro (York West, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, Saturday was National Seniors Day and I will take this opportunity to pay tribute to Canadian seniors.

Seniors made this country great and it is our responsibility to ensure they can live their lives in dignity. After a lifetime of hard work, seniors deserve the assurance that our universal health care system will be there for them and that they will be financially secure when they retire.

As our fastest growing demographic, we face challenges in ensuring seniors can maintain the quality of life they have earned. Seniors have the right to the quality public health care that they need whenever they should need it. Seniors also deserve financial security. They deserve a strong Canadian pension plan and they deserve a government that is not only committed to protecting the CPP but is dedicated to improving its benefits. Sadly, that is not currently the case.

On behalf of the Liberal caucus, I thank our seniors for their contributions to Canada. They can be assured that the Liberals are committed to working on behalf of seniors all across Canada.

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### RELIGIOUS FREEDOM

**Mr. Pierre Poilievre (Nepean—Carleton, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, since the 1979 revolution, authorities in Tehran have condemned Iran's 300,000 Baha'is as apostates.

Twenty years ago, the Ayatollah drew up a secret blueprint to destroy the Baha'i by expelling its followers from universities and denying them employment. That led Baha'i leaders to create their own university, the Institute for Higher Education, which teaches young Iranians who are otherwise deprived of tertiary instruction.

In May, the government arrested dozens of those educational leaders, and many remain imprisoned to this day.

Meanwhile, authorities have recently sentenced seven Baha'i followers to 20 years in prison for ill-defined and unproven allegations. They join at least 100 Iranian Baha'is jailed for their faith.

Canada calls upon the authorities in Tehran to end this odious persecution, release innocent Baha'i prisoners and leave Iranians to enjoy the freedom of religion that is their birthright.

• (1405)

[Translation]

### MENTAL ILLNESS AWARENESS WEEK

**Mr. Dany Morin (Chicoutimi—Le Fjord, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I am proud to rise in the House today in support of Mental Illness Awareness Week, which runs from October 2 to 8 in Canada this year.

Mental Illness Awareness Week was established nearly 20 years ago in order to highlight the challenges and successes of the roughly one in five Canadians who are living with or have had a mental illness. This is also an opportunity for me to join the thousands of Canadians who are calling on this government to implement measures to deal with this issue that costs the Canadian economy close to \$14 billion annually.

In 2003, health agencies in Canada joined forces to call for a national plan of action on mental health. Some eight years later, we are still waiting. During this Mental Illness Awareness Week, I am calling on the Canadian government to show its commitment and dedication to all affected Canadians, their doctors and their families by coming up with an effective, comprehensive mental health action plan.

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[English]

### HARVEST FOR HUNGER

**Mr. Gary Schellenberger (Perth—Wellington, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, this week, in Perth—Wellington, 120 combines will harvest 160 acres of soy beans in less than 10 minutes. If all goes as planned, not only will the participants break a world record, but they will also raise over \$200,000 for the Canadian Foodgrains Bank. What is more, CIDA will match these funds four to one, making this Harvest for Hunger event worth close to \$1 million.

As hon. members know, the Canadian Foodgrains Bank is a partnership of Canadian churches and church-based agencies working to end hunger in developing countries.

I am very proud of the hard work that the Harvest for Hunger organizers have put into this event. This is a fun and exciting example of government, community organizations and individual Canadians partnering together to change the world.

\* \* \*

### WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH

**Ms. Michelle Rempel (Calgary Centre-North, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, October is Women's History Month in Canada. This year's theme is "Women in Canadian Military Forces: A Proud Legacy".

Canadian women have a long history of excellence in military history. We are proud of their individual and collective achievement, as well as their extraordinary dedication.



This year, we celebrate the full range of women's contributions to the military. Whether as members of the armed forces or as civilians providing support roles, women have worked on every front: on the battlefield, in the air and on the sea as pilots, navy commanders and peacekeepers, nurses and physicians, war artists, war correspondents and engineers.

We dedicate Women's History Month 2011 to them.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

#### FRAPRU SOCIAL HOUSING ORGANIZATION

**Mr. Pierre Nantel (Longueuil—Pierre-Boucher, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, today on World Habitat Day, I would like to show my support for a remarkable initiative undertaken by Quebec's Front d'action populaire en réaménagement urbain, or FRAPRU. This morning, in Ottawa and Quebec City, two caravans made up of FRAPRU members and 35 people living in inadequate or social housing demonstrated in front of the offices of the federal and provincial finance departments, and called for 50,000 new social housing units. And that is just for starters.

From October 3 to 9, about 80 people will criss-cross Quebec and travel 3,200 kilometres demanding the right to housing. Artists such as Judi Richards, Webster, Johanne Fontaine and Yvon Deschamps are participating in the caravan for social housing. Next Saturday, in Longueuil, which is in my riding, the two caravans will meet up in St. Mark Park for a rally. The event will come to a close next Sunday in Montreal.

As we all know, the NDP has been proposing a national housing strategy for quite some time. Let us applaud the FRAPRU initiative calling for access to housing for all.

\* \* \*

[English]

#### MENTAL HEALTH

**Mr. Blaine Calkins (Wetaskiwin, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, this is Mental Illness Awareness Week and October 10 is World Mental Health Day.

Mental illness is a pervasive issue affecting the lives of many Canadians and their families. In Canada, it is estimated that one in five of us will experience a mental illness in our lifetime.

Canadians such as Dr. Austin Mardon, this year's winner of the Canadian Medical Association Medal of Honour, has demonstrated outstanding public commitment to raising awareness of mental health issues and diminishing the stigma and discrimination faced by Canadians living with mental illness.

I also invite members to acknowledge the many volunteers and donors who help support initiatives like the Kids Help Phone. In 2010, almost 30% of the calls made to the Kids Help Phone related to mental or emotional health struggles.

Our government is committed to improving the mental health and well-being of Canadians. In 2007, we invested \$130 million over 10 years to create the Mental Health Commission of Canada. In 2008,

#### Statements by Members

we provided an additional \$110 million over five years to the commission for research in mental health and homelessness.

I urge my colleague in the House and all Canadians to support those affected by mental illness and to help promote understanding of this disease.

\* \* \*

● (1410)

[Translation]

#### INTERNATIONAL SENIORS DAY

**Mr. Pierre Jacob (Brome—Missisquoi, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, on Saturday, October 1, I had the opportunity to celebrate International Seniors Day in my riding of Brome—Missisquoi with the Memphrémagog branch of the Association québécoise de défense des droits des personnes retraitées et préretraitées.

International Seniors Day coincides with the UN's International Day of Older Persons, an initiative designed to recognize the great contribution seniors make to society. This initiative encourages governments to implement policies that meet the needs of seniors.

International Seniors Day was an opportunity to recognize how important seniors are to Quebec and Canada and to acknowledge their contribution, whether it be in the home, the community or the business world.

It is essential that seniors be able to fully participate in Quebec and Canadian society under optimal conditions.

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#### SALES TAX HARMONIZATION

**Mr. Jacques Gourde (Lotbinière—Chutes-de-la-Chaudière, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, we have kept our promise.

Last Friday, our Prime Minister and the Premier of Quebec, Jean Charest, announced the conclusion of a memorandum of agreement regarding the harmonization of the Quebec sales tax with the federal goods and services tax.

This is excellent news for Quebec, which has been calling for this for a long time.

Our government delivered on a promise that it made in the Speech from the Throne. With this agreement, Quebecers will no longer have to pay QST on the GST—no more “tax on tax”.

Our Conservative government has proven that it is committed to working closely with the provinces and territories on their priorities, and this is an excellent example of how open federalism should work.

With this historic agreement, our Prime Minister has shown everyone that he is a friend of Quebec.

### Oral Questions

[English]

#### BRAS D'OR LAKES

**Hon. Mark Eyking (Sydney—Victoria, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I rise in the House today to recognize the beautiful Bras d'Or Lakes in Cape Breton, a body of water that forms a true inland sea, which is special to many of us. This unique lake covers over 1,000 square kilometres.

In Dresden, Germany, on July 29, an international committee designated the Bras d'Or Lakes as the 16th UNESCO biosphere reserve in Canada. This designation results from the tireless efforts of many that started back in 2005. I, along with the member for Cape Breton—Canso, would like to send out a special recognition to the Bras d'Or Lake Biosphere Reserve Association, whose passion and dedication was a big part of bringing this all together.

Celebrations were held at various communities on the weekend of September 17, featuring ceremonies and performances that represented the four leading cultures of the Bras d'Or Lakes: Mi'kmaq, Scottish, French and English. It was a great weekend, one in which I was proud to take part.

Congratulations to all who made this designation possible.

\* \* \*

#### DEMOCRATIC REFORM

**Mr. Rodney Weston (Saint John, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, Premier David Alward announced this past weekend that his government intends to proceed with legislation giving New Brunswickers real input into choosing who represents their province in the Senate. As the member of Parliament for Saint John, I can say that this is good news for democracy and good news for my province.

As it stands, the Senate status quo is unacceptable. The Senate's legitimacy and effectiveness will be enhanced when senators have a democratic mandate from Canadians and can no longer serve terms as long as 45 years. It is our Conservative government's long-standing commitment to strengthen and enhance our democratic institutions so Canadians can be better represented by their government. That is why we introduced the Senate reform act.

As an Atlantic Canadian, the Senate could play an important role in giving us a greater voice in our democratic institutions if reasonable and achievable reform is made. Unfortunately, it seems that the opposition would rather support the Senate status quo than work with us to encourage other provinces to follow New Brunswick's lead.

\* \* \*

● (1415)

#### NANCY RICHE

**Mr. Ryan Cleary (St. John's South—Mount Pearl, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to Newfoundlander Nancy Riche, a champion of feminism, a giant of the union movement and fighter for social democracy.

Nancy rose from humble beginnings as a clerk in St. John's to become a key voice in Canadian labour during the 1980s and 1990s, rising to the position of secretary treasurer of the Canadian Labour Congress. Nancy Riche was a feminist, socialist, activist and trade

unionist. Nancy was probably best known in Newfoundland and Labrador for her work with the provincial New Democrats. The NDP are on the verge of a historic breakthrough in my home province and it is due in large part to her work.

What was Nancy like? Nancy was admitted to hospital late last week after suffering a heart attack. She was waiting for surgery and demanded—demanded—to carry out a telephone poll from her hospital bed. She was a tireless worker, adviser and friend to everyone.

Nancy passed away on Saturday at the age of 66. I would ask Nancy to please make sure she says hello to Jack.

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#### NEW DEMOCRATIC PARTY OF CANADA

**Mr. Mark Strahl (Chilliwack—Fraser Canyon, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the NDP claims it stands up for workers, but its actions tell a different story.

While NDP MPs found time to support a few dozen radical activists protesting against the Keystone XL pipeline, not a single NDP MP bothered to show up to support Canada's building trade unions at their event on Thursday night. Nine NDP MPs confirmed their attendance, but none showed up. Apparently the NDP support for union workers does not extend to those working in Canada's oil sands.

Forty percent of these workers are actively engaged in the oil and gas industry. Canada's oil sands directly employ 132,000 people and provide hundreds of thousands of indirect jobs across Canada. With Keystone XL and other projects, it is projected that Canada's oil sands will employ over 600,000 workers, directly and indirectly in the future.

The union official hosting the event Thursday said that the NDP would be very bad for workers and the entire Canadian economy. I could not agree more.

### ORAL QUESTIONS

[English]

#### THE ECONOMY

**Mrs. Nycole Turmel (Hull—Aylmer, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister may not see how big the problems of Canada's economy are. Unemployment is going up. Stock markets are going down. The IMF says that the worst is yet to come.

The NDP has put forward an action plan. The House will vote on it today. Will the Conservatives join the NDP to promote job creation, strengthen pensions, improve aging infrastructure and maintain the public sector contribution to the economy?



*Oral Questions*

**Mrs. Shelly Glover (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, contrary to what was just said by the NDP, we are actually doing relatively well in Canada.

When we look at the facts, Canada has the best fiscal position in the G7, lowest net debt in the G7 and among the lowest deficits in the G7. We have created nearly 600,000 new jobs since July 2009, which is the strongest job creation record in the G7.

However, the global economic recovery remains fragile. We need the NDP to just hold on and wait for it. The next phase of the economic action plan is on its way to create more jobs and continue on this path of success.

[Translation]

**Mrs. Nycole Turmel (Hull—Aylmer, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, during the last election, the NDP introduced a job creation plan.

The NDP proposed to reduce the small business tax rate from 11% to 9% in order to help this sector of our economy, which creates almost half of all new jobs.

Why does the Prime Minister not choose to help small businesses rather than giving billions of dollars in tax breaks to large, profitable corporations?

**Hon. Christian Paradis (Minister of Industry and Minister of State (Agriculture), CPC):** Mr. Speaker, what we understand from the NDP's promises is that they would increase the tax burden by about \$10 billion a year. That is unacceptable; it would kill the economy.

I would like to remind the hon. member that Quebec just received good news in this regard on Friday. A tax harmonization agreement was reached that will put \$2.2 billion in Quebec's coffers. That is the type of action people expect.

● (1420)

**Mrs. Nycole Turmel (Hull—Aylmer, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, if the Prime Minister were serious, he would table a real job creation plan rather than half measures. The NDP proposed the introduction of a job creation tax credit of up to \$4,500 for all employers for each new job created.

Rather than giving tax breaks to large, profitable corporations that do not create jobs, why not reward all those who do?

**Hon. Christian Paradis (Minister of Industry and Minister of State (Agriculture), CPC):** Mr. Speaker, we know that low taxes boost the economy. That is what allows the economy to grow and how jobs can be created.

The results speak for themselves. A total of 600,000 net new jobs have been created in Canada since 2009. That is action and that is what Canadians expect.

We hope that, in the future, the NDP will support the measures we announced in our platform and in the budget—tax assistance measures for small and medium-sized businesses that include hiring credits.

**Ms. Peggy Nash (Parkdale—High Park, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, the problem with this government is that it is always ready to shower tax giveaways on profitable oil companies while putting real job creators last.

A well thought-out economic policy would reward companies that create jobs.

We have repeatedly proposed practical measures such as a \$4,500 tax credit for each job created and an additional \$1,000 for each job that is protected for one year.

Does the government support this reasonable suggestion?

**Mrs. Shelly Glover (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, we agree that Canadians pay far too much in taxes. We must continue to move forward with our plan. It is working well and it is creating jobs. The government feels that taxes should remain low, but we also believe that all businesses and Canadians should be paying their fair share of taxes. That is why, since 2006, we have taken tough measures to close more than 40 tax loopholes. And how did the NDP vote on this issue? They voted against our measures. That is unfortunate.

[English]

**Ms. Peggy Nash (Parkdale—High Park, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, that shows how out of touch those members are.

In the last election we laid out a practical plan to create jobs. In addition to a tax credit for new hires, we proposed lowering small business tax rate by two percentage points, from 11% to 9%. This would help grow our economy and create new jobs in all communities.

Why are the Conservatives rewarding the most profitable companies with big tax giveaways and refusing to lower the tax rate for small businesses? Why are they doing that?

**Mrs. Shelly Glover (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, this government has reduced taxes for small business in a number of ways. In fact, the CFIB's president has said repeatedly that this government has done many things to help small businesses to flourish.

When we talk about creating jobs, we have a plan to support job creation and to support the fact that small businesses need to flourish by having fewer taxes. They need to be able to hire the people who can help their businesses grow. Unfortunately, the NDP votes against those measures time and time again, like flowing \$1 billion in federal funding to provinces and territories for infrastructure, like the accelerated capital cost—

**The Speaker:** Order. The hon. member for Toronto Centre.

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**TAXATION**

**Hon. Bob Rae (Toronto Centre, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the parliamentary secretary referred to the fact that there are taxes that are a real burden on Canadians and I think everyone could agree. The issue that really arises right now is the question of taxes on employment. It is the question of the proposal by the government to increase taxation on employment by \$1.2 billion starting January 1, 2012.

### Oral Questions

I ask the Minister of Human Resources, does the government not understand that this is a killer of jobs, a direct attack on employment and is going to further hurtle us toward a recession?

**Hon. Diane Finley (Minister of Human Resources and Skills Development, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, let us take a look at our record through our economic action plan. We have created almost 600,000 net new jobs since the worst of the recession. That is a record unparalleled in the developed world. We did that in a number of ways including putting a freeze on EI premiums. We had to do that to make sure that companies were encouraged or at least were not prevented from employing people. We also have to strike a balance and make sure that the EI fund is balanced. That was our commitment to Canadians, that we would not create a \$53 billion EI surplus like the Liberals did.

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• (1425)

### CANADA-U.S. RELATIONS

**Hon. Bob Rae (Toronto Centre, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I wonder if the Minister of Foreign Affairs can explain why the Government of Canada is actively planning to conclude an agreement with the United States on perimeter security. It is doing this just at the time when the administration is pushing for buy America which will directly discriminate against Canadian jobs, and just at a time when the Federal Maritime Commission in Washington is holding hearings on imposing yet another set of tariffs, another set of costs on Canadian ports and on Canadian businesses.

Where is the coherence in the government's strategy? Why pursue the perimeter security when we are being nailed with discriminatory actions in Washington?

**Hon. John Baird (Minister of Foreign Affairs, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, it was not so long ago that members opposite were fighting greater trade opportunities south of the border with the United States with NAFTA and now they have come to embrace trade. We are working very closely with the Obama administration to try to make our economies more competitive. There are some proposals out there with which we take great issue and we will continue to fight for Canadian interests every day of the week. We believe in de-thickening the border as the best way to ensure future prosperity for people on both sides of the border.

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[Translation]

### JUDICIAL INDEPENDENCE

**Hon. Bob Rae (Toronto Centre, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, a House committee that is dominated by the Conservatives made the extraordinary decision to call a judge before a parliamentary committee.

I have a question for the Minister of Justice. How can the minister explain this total lack of respect for judicial independence and the separation of powers?

[English]

**Mr. Dean Del Mastro (Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister and to the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the Standing Committee on Access to

Information, Privacy and Ethics did invite a justice to appear before the committee, but let us be clear. We are going to introduce the judge's ruling as evidence before that committee and I hope that all members will review the good work that has been done by the justice in this regard. In fact, we will continue to push forward with inviting Canadians to come before our committee.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

### THE ECONOMY

**Mr. Thomas Mulcair (Outremont, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, this is the third week of the fall session and this government, which claims that the economy and job creation are its main priority, has yet to accomplish anything. Not one thing. There has been no economic initiative, no real initiative. However, the government plans to reduce corporate taxes again on December 31.

Does the government really believe that \$22 billion, including \$11 billion in bonuses for executives, is not enough for the chartered banks?

**Mrs. Shelly Glover (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, as I said before, we have taken a number of steps to adjust corporate and personal taxes throughout the country. Canada has weathered the global economic upheaval better than other countries as a result of its plan to reduce the tax burden. Since forming the government in 2006, we have put an average of \$3,000 in the pockets of Canadian families. We also leave more money in the hands of entrepreneurs and businesses so they can grow and employ more Canadians. Our plan is working.

**Mr. Thomas Mulcair (Outremont, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, at this time the Conservatives are saddling future generations with the biggest environmental, economic and social debt in our history. Since coming to power, they have gutted the manufacturing sector and destabilized our previously balanced economy, which Canada has built up since the second world war. There is a great void—except for tax reductions for the banks that make \$22 billion profits.

When will they invest in good quality jobs for young people, who will have to foot the bill?

**Hon. Christian Paradis (Minister of Industry and Minister of State (Agriculture), CPC):** Mr. Speaker, let us stick to the facts. Our low tax plan has resulted in the creation of 600,000 net new jobs since 2009. Canada's economic leadership is recognized internationally. What we do know is that the NDP is pushing a plan that would increase our tax burden by \$10 billion a year. We know that it would kill the economy and that is definitely not the direction that this government will take.



• (1430)

[English]

### EMPLOYMENT

**Ms. Libby Davies (Vancouver East, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, in the last federal election New Democrats put forward a solid proposal to support small businesses, the real job creators in our economy. This plan applied to all employers and gave them room to hire and retain more staff. The government could have enacted it immediately, thus supporting Canadian businesses and staving off rising unemployment numbers.

Why does the government prefer to blow billions on corporate tax cuts with no guarantee a single job will be created?

**Mrs. Shelly Glover (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I will repeat one more time that 600,000 jobs have been created.

As far as we compare to the rest of the world, Canada's GDP and employment have both recovered to pre-crisis levels, outperforming all of the G7 countries. We are proud of that. We are proud of the measures we have put forward with our economic action plan, and wait for it, the next phase is about to come.

**Ms. Libby Davies (Vancouver East, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, we know that we have not recovered the jobs from that recession.

We know that the New Democrat job creation plan makes more sense than shipping jobs overseas, more sense than across-the-board corporate tax cuts, and more sense than rewarding already profitable corporations.

When will the government implement this practical, affordable, hiring credit to kickstart job creation and get our economy moving again? Why will it not do this?

**Mrs. Shelly Glover (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I am so glad to hear NDP members talk about a hiring credit, because in fact, that is coming in the next phase of Canada's economic action plan.

We recognize the vital role of small businesses, and that is important, because they play a very important role in the economy and job creation. That is why we have lowered their tax bill in many ways. We reduced the small business tax rate from 12% to 11%, but the NDP voted against it. We increased the amount of income eligible for the lower small business tax rate from \$300,000 to \$500,000, and the—

**The Speaker:** Order. The hon. member for Saint-Jean.

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### AFGHANISTAN

**Mr. Tarik Brahmi (Saint-Jean, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, according to a release by Canadian Press, the defence minister was kept out of key decisions about Canada's role in the Afghan war.

This was a top defence priority, yet the Prime Minister was calling all the shots. The Prime Minister could have used some advice. Most agree our efforts should have focused more on peace talks and diplomacy.

### Oral Questions

Is Prime Minister still making foreign policy and defence decisions on his own, or does he now let his cabinet in the room?

[Translation]

**Hon. Peter MacKay (Minister of National Defence, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, we have always worked closely with the Prime Minister and with cabinet.

[English]

However, it is interesting to hear the hon. member talk about somehow reaching out to the Taliban or improving coordination inside Afghanistan. Even the Afghanistan government and the president himself have said that as a result of the assassination of Rabbani, it is back to business as usual. This unfortunately belays the fact that we cannot work with a terrorist organization that does not respect human rights, that does not respect women and that refuses to disarm.

I will take no advice from the member opposite.

[Translation]

**Mr. Tarik Brahmi (Saint-Jean, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister's Office wants to control public opinion so much that it kept even the Minister of National Defence in the dark about the mission in Afghanistan. However, Canadians wanted a different approach. They wanted an approach like the one proposed by the NDP. This government only cares about its own interests, which are not those of the Canadian people.

Conservative ministers do not even know what is going on in their own departments. So how can Canadians expect any transparency from this government?

**Hon. Peter MacKay (Minister of National Defence, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, once again, that is false.

[English]

I am very proud of the efforts the Canadian Forces have put forward in Afghanistan in conjunction with our other government departments. CIDA and the Department of Foreign Affairs have created an environment where there are now seven million Afghan children going to school. We are immunizing children. We are working with all of our international partners and the Afghanistan government. However, the New Democratic Party opposite has consistently voted against those efforts.

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• (1435)

### ETHICS

**Mr. Matthew Kellway (Beaches—East York, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, the Department of National Defence continues to spring leaks about the minister's misuse of DND assets. By now we have all heard that the minister takes government jets like most Canadians take the bus. Now we find out that the Prime Minister personally kept the Minister of National Defence out of the loop on the Afghan war.

### Oral Questions

Why is the Prime Minister defending a minister that he himself has so little confidence in?

**Hon. Peter MacKay (Minister of National Defence, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, as I and the Prime Minister have said, we use government assets for government business. That is exactly what has happened.

With respect to Afghanistan, we have made a magnificent effort on behalf of Canadians. They can be very proud of the work our men and women in uniform and our professional public servants have put forth in Afghanistan. As a government we have supported them. We have given them the resources. Unfortunately, the member's party opposite cannot say the same thing.

**Mr. Matthew Kellway (Beaches—East York, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, the Conservatives' use of the repatriation of fallen Canadian soldiers to cover the Minister of National Defence's abuse of government jets is appalling. Using fallen military men and women for political damage control tarnishes their sacrifice. It is an insult to the families of those soldiers.

When will the minister take responsibility for his own decisions and stop using fallen soldiers as an excuse for his abuse of government jets?

**Hon. Peter MacKay (Minister of National Defence, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the hon. member has it wrong. His feigned indignation once again brings shame to his party. In my four and one-half years as Minister of National Defence, I have made every effort to be at every repatriation of any fallen soldier, to be there to support the families and all the men and women in uniform who stand in harm's way on behalf of our country. I will continue to do that.

[Translation]

**Mr. Pierre-Luc Dusseault (Sherbrooke, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, is it true that the Minister of National Defence broke the rules regarding the use of government aircraft? I would like to quote an expert in the field who said, "The short answer is yes". That is how the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of National Defence replied yesterday when asked the question.

Does the Minister of National Defence agree with his colleague, friend and parliamentary secretary regarding the fact that he broke the rules regarding the use of government aircraft?

[English]

**Hon. Peter MacKay (Minister of National Defence, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, as the member knows full well, and he should be intellectually honest, I have always complied with government rules and those published guidelines.

While I am on my feet, I want to correct the member and the network that he is quoting because they have since recounted. In fact, they said that they were wrong in the information they had on their website. While I am on my feet, they have also publicly disclosed that the cost of flights by the Department of National Defence are less than a third of the figures that CTV have been using.

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### THE ENVIRONMENT

**Ms. Kirsty Duncan (Etobicoke North, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the scientific journal *Nature* has just announced the discovery of an

Arctic ozone hole. Co-authors on the study include scientists at Environment Canada who recently received letters saying that their jobs are in jeopardy.

When will these scientists have their letters rescinded so that they can continue their important work, and when will the government allow the scientists the freedom to discuss their discovery?

**Hon. Peter Kent (Minister of the Environment, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, Canadians can indeed be proud of the great contribution that Environment Canada scientists make to international studies like this one on the arctic ozone hole. The findings are troubling, and that is why Environment Canada will continue to monitor the ozone. That is why the World Ozone and Ultraviolet Radiation Data Centre will continue to provide world-class services.

Finally, Environment Canada scientists regularly talk to the media.

[Translation]

**Mr. Marc Garneau (Westmount—Ville-Marie, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, does the minister really understand the scope of the problem? Does he understand the science?

For the first time, a large hole has been discovered in the ozone layer over the Arctic. This is a very serious problem and it is believed that climate change might be a factor.

Even if he does not understand the science, does the minister realize that muzzling our scientists—and even worse, laying them off—would be very foolish, especially when their research has never been more crucial?

● (1440)

[English]

**Hon. Peter Kent (Minister of the Environment, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, let me say again that we are not muzzling scientists. They speak to the responsible media all the time, and they speak to and will brief environment critics on the other side of the House.

As my colleague should know, Canada has banned ozone-depleting chemicals like chlorofluorocarbons. I was proud today to announce, with my colleague the Minister of Health, the renewal and the refunding of Canada's world-renowned chemicals management plan.

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### ETHICS

**Hon. Geoff Regan (Halifax West, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, at a time of belt-tightening, the arrogance of Conservative ministers is downright audacious.

The defence minister took a \$16,000 taxi ride in a helicopter, while search and rescue resources are at the breaking point, and the Treasury Board minister blew \$50 million on gazebos and gravy, so it is not surprising that the foreign affairs minister would buy 10,000 gold-embossed business cards.

However, why would the Treasury Board minister allow him to remove the word "Canada" from his cards?



*Oral Questions*

**Hon. John Baird (Minister of Foreign Affairs, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I can correct the member opposite in three categories. One, I did not order 10,000 business cards. Two, there is no gold on my business card; it is not real gold. Three, the word “Canada” is on my business card.

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**G8 SUMMIT**

**Mr. Charlie Angus (Timmins—James Bay, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, it is now 116 days and counting since the President of the Treasury Board went AWOL, and he still has not explained how he broke all the rules for spending, which leads us to the project in the Lake of Bays.

He actually showed up in town with a cheque for \$4.5 million, despite having no signed deal and no business plan. No wonder the town councillors told him they did not want to have anything to do with him. We cannot hand out taxpayers' money from the trunk of a car.

Would the minister stand in this House and explain such tawdry behaviour?

**Hon. John Baird (Minister of Foreign Affairs, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the tone of that question is deeply disappointing, especially from that member. The minister did no such thing.

**Mr. Charlie Angus (Timmins—James Bay, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, it is those kinds of answers that show the government's contempt for Canadians and accountability, and it is the Lake of Bays project that shows the minister's irresponsible attitude toward taxpayer spending.

He promoted a scheme that had no business plan, no viability study, no idea of costs or even a construction plan, yet he was willing to throw millions at a project that even the town did not want to have anything to do with.

Why did the Muskoka minister use taxpayers' money to feather his own political bed? Would he stand in this House and explain himself?

**Hon. John Baird (Minister of Foreign Affairs, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, let us put some facts on the record: no funding was given to the project that the member opposite speaks of.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

**PUBLIC SAFETY**

**Ms. Anne Minh-Thu Quach (Beauharnois—Salaberry, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, the Franklin border crossing in my riding has been closed since April. Yet the Americans have increased patrols on their side of the border. The government claims that the economy is a priority, but cuts at the crossing in Franklin show the complete opposite. In addition to customs officers and business people, workers have also lost their jobs. As a result, the local economy and the security of neighbouring communities are in jeopardy.

Will the government rethink its decision and invest in security and people's jobs?

[English]

**Ms. Candice Hoepfner (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Safety, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, we share border concerns with the U.S. and we collaborate with the U.S. We want to ensure that we have a safe and secure border to make sure that criminals are not coming in but that fair trade and the movement of individuals and businesses is happening.

We are watching taxpayers' dollars when it comes to the amalgamation of administration. We are very proud of two things: the way we watch over our borders as well as taxpayers' dollars.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

**G8 SUMMIT**

**Mr. Alexandre Boulerice (Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, instead of watching over our borders, this government wasted \$50 million, and now we know what that money was used for. It went towards building a media centre that the media themselves never used. It went towards building a university campus that still has no students. All the towns had to do was go to the minister's constituency office and fill out a form. The President of the Treasury Board does not seem to understand that value for money is not defined as getting himself re-elected.

Will he rise and explain this wasteful spending?

• (1445)

[English]

**Hon. John Baird (Minister of Foreign Affairs, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, later on today we will be voting on a resolution put forward by the NDP calling for greater investment in municipal infrastructure. Thirty-two projects received funding. That was to repave the runway of an airport in North Bay, far from the member opposite's constituency, repaving provincial highways and supporting a municipal public works project. Each of these created jobs and each of these came in on time and on budget, or even under budget, and is going to support local infrastructure in that region.

I would think the member opposite would want to be supportive of these types of important investments.

\* \* \*

**LABOUR NEGOTIATIONS**

**Mr. Guy Lauzon (Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, constituents of Stormont, Dundas and South Glengarry and all Canadians are concerned about the possibility of a work stoppage on the St. Lawrence Seaway. The effects of a shutdown could be devastating to our economic recovery.

Because the seaway plays such a vital role in the economic stability of Canada, could the Minister of Labour give the House an update on the status of the current labour negotiations at the St. Lawrence Seaway?

*Oral Questions*

**Hon. Lisa Raitt (Minister of Labour, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, our government remains focused on the economic recovery and, of course, financial security for all Canadians.

The best deal that the parties can come to on their own is the best one that they will get. That is why I am very pleased to tell Canadians in the House today that the St. Lawrence Seaway Management Corporation and the National Automobile, Aerospace, Transportation and General Workers Union of Canada have signed a tentative agreement.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

**STATUS OF WOMEN**

**Ms. Françoise Boivin (Gatineau, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, last week, a Conservative member of Parliament said that his government was in the process of successfully modifying its approach to the abortion issue. On Friday, another Conservative MP said exactly the same thing.

Is this government changing women's rights against their will or is the Prime Minister unable to control his caucus?

**Hon. Peter Van Loan (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, we will admit that this issue stirs up passions. Nevertheless, the government is not reopening the debate.

**Ms. Françoise Boivin (Gatineau, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I am not exactly reassured by the minister's response. Three Conservative MPs are trying in a roundabout way to reopen the debate on abortion. In Canada, abortion has been legal for decades. Clearly, some Conservative MPs do not accept that, even though a majority of Canadians do.

Can the Prime Minister assure us that he will not allow a private member's bill on abortion to be introduced?

[English]

**Hon. Peter Van Loan (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the position of this government is clear. While there are understandable passions and feelings on all sides of the House on all sides of the issue, our government's position is clear: we will not be reopening this issue.

\* \* \*

**JUSTICE**

**Ms. Jinny Jogindera Sims (Newton—North Delta, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, once again the government just cannot get its story straight. Last week the justice minister stood in the House and pretended to know nothing about a Conservative bill repealing the speech provisions in the Canadian Human Rights Act, but on Friday the Conservative member for Westlock—St. Paul introduced such a bill.

Either the government is opposed to laws banning hate speech or the Prime Minister has lost control of his caucus. Which is it?

**Hon. Rob Nicholson (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, all members are entitled to enter private members' bills, and they will be debated and looked at by all members of the House. If the NDP has a different rule, let us hear what it is.

We have been very clear. I was asked about the government's priorities and I indicated very clearly that we were going to go after drug dealers, the people who bring drugs into this country, and we are going after those individuals who sexually molest children. I would hope that for once this would get the support of the NDP.

**Ms. Jinny Jogindera Sims (Newton—North Delta, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, while families struggle and Canada slides back into recession, the government is becoming distracted by its own caucus members.

First it was abortion and now it is hate speech. What other out-of-touch issues does the government have up its sleeve?

Why is the government pushing divisive and extreme private members' bills? Is it that the Prime Minister cannot control the extremist members of his caucus, or is it that he is encouraging them?

• (1450)

**Hon. Peter Van Loan (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, our government's priorities have been quite clear. Our focus is on the economy. In fact, later today the members opposite will have an opportunity to support our low-tax plan for jobs and growth by voting in favour of a ways and means motion that is going to help advance that economic agenda.

It is not surprising that Conservative members on their own would bring forward private members' bills that would combat crime, take on criminals, seek to help the economy and remove barriers to trade. Those are all sensible things for Conservatives to do.

We hope that the opposition will see the wisdom in fighting crime and helping our economy as well.

\* \* \*

**SEARCH AND RESCUE**

**Ms. Judy Foote (Random—Burin—St. George's, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, Canada's search and rescue response time is one of the worst in the world.

The government's lack of funding is to blame. Response time between the hours of 8 a.m. and 4 p.m. is 30 minutes, but if a vessel is in trouble outside of banker's hours, it must wait up to two hours before search and rescue is off the ground. Seconds equal lives.

Clearly the government has again confused the sprawling oceans with the Ottawa River.

Why does the Minister of National Defence refuse to address this issue and describe the substandard service as "optimal and effective"?



**Hon. Peter MacKay (Minister of National Defence, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, let me describe Canada's search and rescue territory. It actually covers 18 million square kilometres of land and sea, an area greater than the size of continental Europe.

Here are a few facts for the member. Each year the Canadian Forces and the Coast Guard respond to over 8,000 incidents, tasking military aircraft or ships for 1,100 cases, saving on average 1,200 lives annually and assisting some 20,000 people.

Search and rescue is a no-fail mission. I am very proud of our SAR techs, members of the Canadian Forces who each and every day perform heroics on behalf of Canadians.

**Ms. Judy Foote (Random—Burin—St. George's, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, while the Minister of National Defence treats our search and rescue as his personal limousine service, inadequate funding to search and rescue has resulted in one of the slowest response times in the world.

The government closed Maritime rescue centres in St. John's and Quebec, and it claims that its increase to military funding will make up for it. Last time I checked, an overpriced stealth fighter jet was not useful for rescues at sea.

Why does the government believe that only three Cormorant search and rescue helicopters are sufficient to patrol an area the size of Europe?

**Hon. Peter MacKay (Minister of National Defence, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the hon. member's inflamed and insulting rhetoric does nothing to elevate the debate on this subject. Everyone feels the loss when individuals find themselves in peril.

A lot of factors come into play. In 2010, 103 Squadron, based in Gander, had an average response time of under 20 minutes during the 30-minute posture and under 51 minutes when it came to the evening posture. They work hard each and every day to save lives.

We support them in their work. We support them with their equipment. The member opposite should—

**The Speaker:** Order. The hon. member for Rivière-des-Mille-Îles.

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## THE ENVIRONMENT

**Ms. Laurin Liu (Rivière-des-Mille-Îles, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, a hole in the ozone layer twice the size of Ontario has developed over the Arctic this spring, exposing northern Canadians to dangerous levels of radiation.

It was thanks to the research of Canadian scientists that we discovered the serious extent of this problem, but instead of taking action, the government has actually chosen to cut the ozone monitoring and research program.

With such a serious threat looming over Canada, will Conservatives finally commit to fully fund ozone research?

**Hon. Peter Kent (Minister of the Environment, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, we have been around this any number of times in the past couple of weeks.

Environment Canada has indeed contributed magnificently to this study. As I said earlier, the results are troubling. Canada banned

ozone-depleting chemicals some years ago, but they remain in the atmosphere and in the stratosphere for many years. They will continue to negatively impact ozone for years to come.

[Translation]

**Ms. Laurin Liu (Rivière-des-Mille-Îles, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, it is only through the foreign media that Canadians are becoming aware of the threats to their health and their environment.

David Tarasick conducted a study for Environment Canada which revealed the presence of a hole in the ozone layer, but this government is preventing him from talking to the media.

Is the government trying to hide scientific data or trying to cover up its error in cutting the budget for monitoring the ozone layer?

• (1455)

[English]

**Hon. Peter Kent (Minister of the Environment, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the government, Environment Canada, and all Canadians should be very proud of Dr. Tarasick's contribution to this study. As I have said, the results are troubling and that is why Environment Canada will continue to monitor ozone in the troposphere and stratosphere. That is why the World Ozone and Ultraviolet Radiation Data Centre will continue to deliver world-class services.

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## TAXATION

**Mr. John Williamson (New Brunswick Southwest, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, many of my constituents in New Brunswick Southwest have contacted me to say they are deeply concerned about the new U.S. tax reporting requirements. This affects many Canadians throughout the country. The vast majority of people being targeted by the IRS are honest, hard-working and law-abiding. They have obediently paid their Canadian taxes. Their only transgression has been failing to file IRS paperwork they were unaware that they were required to file. Many people face huge penalties for failing to file, even though they do not owe any U.S. tax.

Could the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance please update the House on the latest developments on this issue and what steps our government is taking to protect Canadian taxpayers?

**Mrs. Shelly Glover (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my colleague for this very important question. We share this concern and raised this issue directly with the U.S. government. We have also been very clear: any penalties imposed by the IRS under FBAR will not be collected by Canada. As such, we have called, and will continue to call, on the U.S. government to look upon them with leniency.

### Oral Questions

We are also happy to report some progress as the IRS has released a statement that says:

The IRS recognizes that many Canadians face complex tax situations because of dual citizenship—

It goes on to say:

Recent publicity about the issue has spotlighted a number of areas that the IRS will consider in our continuing effort to strike the right balance in administering the U.S. tax laws.

\* \* \*

### HEALTH

**Hon. Hedy Fry (Vancouver Centre, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the Supreme Court's unanimous ruling on Vancouver's Insite and its proven lifesaving services engages section 7 of the charter on life and security of the person of the IV drug users who use the facility. The public health officers of 17 Canadian cities wish to set up similar safe injection sites.

Will the Government of Canada respect the intent and effect of the court's ruling, and grant further exemptions for cities to replicate Insite's success?

**Hon. Leona Aglukkaq (Minister of Health and Minister of the Canadian Northern Economic Development Agency, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, as I stated on Friday, we are disappointed with the Supreme Court of Canada's decision, but we will comply with it. We also believe that the system should be focused on preventing people from becoming drug addicts in the first place. Our government believes that spending money on treatment to support and help people stay off drugs is the best investment we can make.

\* \* \*

### SENIORS

**Ms. Irene Mathysen (London—Fanshawe, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, on Seniors Day, the government boasted about tax measures that would help seniors. The reality is that over 0.25 million—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

**The Speaker:** Order, please. The hon. member for London—Fanshawe.

**Ms. Irene Mathysen:** Mr. Speaker, I am glad to see they are so busy patting themselves on the back but with over 0.25 million seniors living in poverty, tax measures are not the solution. Many seniors are so poor they do not even pay taxes.

When will the minister take action to address the real problems facing our seniors by boosting access to home care, eliminating seniors poverty and supporting caregivers?

**Hon. Alice Wong (Minister of State (Seniors), CPC):** Mr. Speaker, our government was given a strong mandate. It is doing more for seniors than under any other government. It was our government that introduced pension income splitting and doubled the pension income credit. We lowered taxes and removed 380,000 seniors from the tax rolls completely. We also raised the guaranteed income supplement exemption, putting more money in the pockets of 1.6 million more seniors. What did the opposition do? It voted against all of these measures.

### HUMAN RIGHTS

**Mr. Merv Tweed (Brandon—Souris, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the right to one's religion and to practise that religion are fundamental human freedoms. I know our government used these as key elements of Canadian foreign policy.

Could the foreign affairs minister please update the House on Canada's efforts in this regard?

• (1500)

**Hon. John Baird (Minister of Foreign Affairs, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, let me thank the member for Brandon—Souris for his leadership in this regard. Protecting and promoting religious freedom is an important part of Canada's principled foreign policy. We are speaking up around the world, at the United Nations, and every other corner of the world for religious freedoms. Whenever there are more religious freedoms, there are better human rights, and more freedoms which we strongly believe are important.

I was pleased to see more than 100 people of different faiths come to Ottawa to offer their advice and suggestions on the establishment of an office of religious freedom, something we committed to do in the Speech from the Throne. We will listen and then we will act on a path to religious freedom.

\* \* \*

### HARMONIZED SALES TAX

**Ms. Chris Charlton (Hamilton Mountain, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, perhaps the finance minister was unaware before he decided to endorse him, but the Ontario PC leader is actually running against one of the Prime Minister's key economic policies, the HST. Mr. Hudak called the HST a bad deal, a punishing tax grab that will kill jobs and hurt families.

Will the Conservatives help out their good buddy Mr. Hudak, acknowledge the HST was an unfair tax grab, and finally agree to exempt hydro and home heating from the HST?

**Mrs. Shelly Glover (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, as we have said many times in this place, provincial taxation is a provincial responsibility and changes to provincial taxation are exclusive decisions of the provincial government. Provinces have full independence to make decisions on sales tax matters and out of respect for the elected provincial legislatures or assemblies, and we are going to hear about those in the next couple of days, Parliament has agreed to facilitate such provincial decisions.



[Translation]

### FLOODING IN MONTRÉGIE

**Mr. Jean-François Fortin (Haute-Gaspésie—La Mitis—Matane—Matapédia, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, on June 6, the Prime Minister went to Montérégie himself and promised a new mitigation plan to help flooding victims. This plan will also help victims of the high tides in the Gaspé. But so far, the people of Montérégie and the Gaspé have not seen any semblance of a mitigation plan or a single penny of the money promised by this government. People cannot wait any longer.

Can the Prime Minister tell us when and how he plans to give financial aid to the victims through the new measures he has promised?

**Hon. Denis Lebel (Minister of Transport, Infrastructure and Communities and Minister of the Economic Development Agency of Canada for the Regions of Quebec, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to make a correction. The Prime Minister stated how important it was that the government respect provincial jurisdictions. When something happens in a province, it is first up to the province to compensate the people, and then the federal government reimburses the province. The mitigation plan is for the entire country, in order to protect the entire area surrounding the flood zone. It is not, as the member stated, an aid program.

## ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

[English]

### COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE

#### PROCEDURE AND HOUSE AFFAIRS

**Mr. Joe Preston (Elgin—Middlesex—London, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Orders 104 and 114 I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the third report of the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs regarding the membership of committees of the House. If the House gives its consent, I intend to move concurrence in the third report later today.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

### CANADA LABOUR CODE

**Mr. Alexandre Boulerice (Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie, NDP)** moved for leave to introduce Bill C-307, An Act to amend the Canada Labour Code (pregnant or nursing employees).

He said: Mr. Speaker, it is with great joy and pride that I rise today in this House to introduce a bill that meets the needs of the workers' movement across the country and responds to the demands of many women's groups. The purpose of this bill, which is completely reasonable, is to correct a great injustice—the differential treatment of female workers subject to the Quebec Labour Code or other provincial labour codes and those working in organizations under federal jurisdiction, who are subject to the Canada Labour Code.

The Canada Labour Code does not include the true right to preventive withdrawal for pregnant or nursing women. This bill seeks to correct this injustice and give all female workers across the

### Routine Proceedings

country access to the compensation provided for in the provincial legislation so that they can withdraw in health if their work threatens their health and safety or that of their unborn child.

The Canada Labour Code currently provides only for unpaid leave. In other words, it puts the health and safety of certain women or certain fetuses at risk by forcing women to stay at work too long because they do not have the financial means to withdraw in order to protect their health and safety and that of their child.

Since I trust that all members of this House care about the health of women and their unborn children and that they want to stand up for families, I expect nothing less than unanimous support for this bill.

(Motions deemed adopted, bill read the first time and printed)

\* \* \*

● (1505)

[English]

### NEWFOUNDLAND AND LABRADOR FISHERY REBUILDING ACT

**Mr. Ryan Cleary (St. John's South—Mount Pearl, NDP)** moved for leave to introduce Bill C-308, An Act respecting a Commission of Inquiry into the development and implementation of a national fishery rebuilding strategy for fish stocks off the coast of Newfoundland and Labrador.

He said: Mr. Speaker, I am proud today to present my private member's bill to the House of Commons. The bill's short title is the Newfoundland and Labrador fishery rebuilding act. It has been almost 20 years since John Crosbie, then federal minister of fisheries and oceans, shut down the northern cod fishery off Newfoundland's northeast coast and Labrador. It is 19 years and 4 months later and the commercial groundfish fisheries off Newfoundland and Labrador have seen little, if any, recovery. Most fisheries are in desperate shape.

Five years after Confederation in 1954, we handed over responsibility of our fisheries to the Government of Canada. I would describe our fisheries as Confederation's greatest failure, a national embarrassment, a national shame. A commission of inquiry is not about pointing fingers of blame, but pointing the way forward with a recovery plan, with a blueprint for the future.

(Motions deemed adopted, bill read the first time and printed)

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### PREVENTING PERSONS FROM CONCEALING THEIR IDENTITY DURING RIOTS AND UNLAWFUL ASSEMBLIES ACT

**Mr. Blake Richards (Wild Rose, CPC)** moved for leave to introduce Bill C-309, An Act to amend the Criminal code (concealment of identity).

*Routine Proceedings*

He said: Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure to rise today in the House to introduce my private member's bill, the preventing persons from concealing their identity during riots and unlawful assemblies act. This act would amend the Criminal Code to make it an offence to wear a mask or other disguise to conceal one's identity while taking part in a riot or unlawful assembly.

This would give the tool to police to first, hopefully prevent these kinds of things from getting out of hand; and, second, if and when they do, it would give them another tool to punish those who were involved in these kinds of things and ensure they do not get too far out of hand.

(Motions deemed adopted, bill read the first time and printed)

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**CRIMINAL CODE**

**Mrs. Joy Smith (Kildonan—St. Paul, CPC)** moved for leave to introduce Bill C-310, An Act to amend the Criminal Code (trafficking in persons).

She said: Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to introduce another bill that would support my last bill, Bill C-268, a human trafficking bill. If trafficking is committed by a person outside Canada, by a Canadian or a permanent resident, they can be prosecuted in Canada.

Also, the second amendment would enhance the current definition of exploitation in the trafficking in persons offence, giving specific examples.

The rising crime of human trafficking is still very much something about which to be concerned. I know 10 years ago when my son was in the ICE unit, he taught me a lot about what happened with the trafficking of victims. I began working with victims.

It is imperative that all members on this side of the House support this kind of private member's bill that would do something to help the victims of the heinous crime.

(Motions deemed adopted, bill read the first time and printed)

\* \* \*

• (1510)

**IMPORTATION OF INTOXICATING LIQUORS ACT**

**Mr. Dan Albas (Okanagan—Coquihalla, CPC)** moved for leave to introduce Bill C-311, An Act to amend the Importation of Intoxicating Liquors Act (interprovincial importation of wine for personal use).

He said: Mr. Speaker, in the year 1928 a prohibition era law was passed and to this day makes it illegal to bring a bottle of wine from one province to another.

Canadians are a law-abiding people who like to follow the law and many share a passion for our great Canadian wines. This passion for wine, along with the hard work of many Canadian families, have resulted in wineries now being located in every province across our great nation.

My bill proposes an amendment to the Importation of Intoxicating Liquors Act. This amendment would create a personal exemption from the act. This personal exemption would allow individuals to either directly import, send, take, or transport or cause

to be imported, sent, taken or transported wine only for personal consumption. This is not for resale or for other commercial use in quantities as permitted by the province in question.

I would like to recognize the member for Kelowna—Lake Country for his ongoing work on this subject. I would also like to thank the many small wineries in my riding of Okanagan—Coquihalla for their invaluable assistance in bringing this matter forward.

(Motions deemed adopted, bill read the first time and printed)

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[Translation]

**DEMOCRATIC REPRESENTATION ACT**

**Mr. Jean Rousseau (Compton—Stanstead, NDP)** moved for leave to introduce Bill C-312, An Act to amend the Constitution Act, 1867 (democratic representation).

He said: Mr. Speaker, I am very proud to introduce my bill, which would amend the rules in the Constitution Act, 1867, for readjusting the number of members of the House of Commons and the representation of the provinces in that House. For decades, the provinces of British Columbia, Ontario and Alberta have been growing quickly, and therefore they are seriously under-represented in the House. This could be the case for a long time if nothing is done. However, despite repeated promises to restore democratic fairness in the country, the Conservatives are dragging their feet. During the last parliament, Bill C-12 was never called for debate by the government. When the government refuses to take action, the New Democrat official opposition rises to the occasion.

In doing so, the NDP is giving a real meaning to the formal recognition of the Quebec nation by the House on November 27, 2006, by proposing protection for Quebec's political weight, as unanimously called for by the Quebec National Assembly. My bill provides for a minimum representation with respect to the number of members for the province of Quebec.

(Motions deemed adopted, bill read the first time and printed)

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[English]

**FOOD AND DRUGS ACT**

**Mrs. Patricia Davidson (Sarnia—Lambton, CPC)** moved for leave to introduce Bill C-313, An Act to amend the Food and Drugs Act (non-corrective cosmetic contact lenses).

She said: Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise today to introduce my bill, an act to amend the Food and Drugs Act. I also want to thank my colleague, the member for Scarborough Centre, for seconding this bill.



*Routine Proceedings**[English]*

The bill would deem non-corrective contact lenses to be a class II medical device. Those who were in the House prior to this session will know that my Motion No. 409 started this work. The bill would continue that work. I look forward to the same unanimous consent as in the last sitting.

(Motions deemed adopted, bill read the first time and printed)

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**BREAST DENSITY AWARENESS ACT**

**Mr. Patrick Brown (Barrie, CPC)** moved for leave to introduce Bill C-314, An Act respecting the awareness of screening among women with dense breast tissue.

He said: Mr. Speaker, this enactment would require the Government of Canada to encourage the use of existing initiatives in order to increase the awareness of women about the implications of dense breast tissue for breast cancer screening and to assist health care providers in making well-informed decisions regarding screening.

According to the Canadian Cancer Society, in 2011 it is expected that over 23,000 Canadian females will be diagnosed with breast cancer, of which, regrettably, over 5,000 will pass away.

The Government of Canada can certainly play an effective role in the adoption of effective early detection screening practices. Targeting dense tissue is one of the means by which we can make a tangible difference.

(Motions deemed adopted, bill read the first time and printed)

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● (1515)

*[Translation]***CANADA LABOUR CODE**

**Mr. Robert Aubin (Trois-Rivières, NDP)** moved for leave to introduce Bill C-315, An Act to amend the Canada Labour Code (French language).

He said: Mr. Speaker, it is with great pleasure that I rise today to introduce a private member's bill to harmonize the language requirements that apply to federal businesses operating in Quebec with those in force in that province.

Although we must admit that the Conservatives were the ones to recognize Quebec as a nation, there is no denying that this concept has turned out to be nothing more than an empty gesture. This bill, however, would recognize the culture, language and rights of thousands of workers in Quebec on a daily basis.

This bill represents a step towards tangible recognition of Quebec as a nation within Canada, without taking anything away from the country's other provinces and territories. This clearly demonstrates the NDP's approach and its desire to move Canada forward by implementing asymmetrical federalism in which everyone feels that they have a voice and are being respected.

(Motions deemed adopted, bill read the first time and printed.)

**EMPLOYMENT INSURANCE ACT**

**Mr. Richard Harris (Cariboo—Prince George, CPC)** moved for leave to introduce Bill C-316, An Act to amend the Employment Insurance Act (incarceration).

He said: Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the hon. member for Barrie for his support and seconding this bill, my Ottawa staff for help they provided in putting this together and my wife, Annie, for the support she gives me and, indeed, on this private member's bill.

I believe that most Canadians, maybe as high as 99%, maybe a vast majority of members of Parliament and maybe yourself, Mr. Speaker, do not know that going to prison could allow someone to double the amount of time they can apply for and receive in employment insurance benefits. Sections 8 and 10 of the Employment Insurance Act currently allow for prisoners to receive the same level of opportunity as hard-working Canadians who are in need of employment insurance. My bill would repeal those provisions in the Employment Insurance Act so prisoners would no longer be able to apply for an extension to their employment insurance benefits simply because they were in jail.

Why should criminals receive the same level of treatment as hard-working Canadians who are pregnant, or suffer illnesses or injuries? As an example, a mother in Québec was denied employment insurance after her place of employment went out of business because she had just returned from maternity leave and had not worked enough hours in the previous year. If she had been in prison, however, instead of on maternity leave, she would have been able to receive the extended benefit. This is crazy.

Thus, quite simply, the bill would change the EI Act so that those who serving time for crime no longer would be able to receive preferential treatment over hard-working Canadians, who deserve and need this kind of help. This bill is all about fairness for hard-working Canadians.

(Motions deemed adopted, bill read the first time and printed)

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**INCOME TAX ACT**

**Mr. Russ Hiebert (South Surrey—White Rock—Cloverdale, CPC)** moved for leave to introduce Bill C-317, An Act to amend the Income Tax Act (labour organizations).

He said: Mr. Speaker, it is my privilege to introduce a bill to amend the Income Tax Act for labour organizations. I would like to thank the member for New Brunswick Southwest for seconding the bill.

Labour organizations play a valuable role in Canadian society, representing and defending the rights of workers to health and safety on the job and ensuring good compensation for the work that they do.

### Routine Proceedings

The bill would require a public disclosure of the finances of labour unions. This is in line with the increased transparency we have introduced for government departments, agencies and native reserves. Public disclosure is strongly supported by the Canadian public and even more so by union members themselves.

The basic premise of the bill is that every labour union in Canada would file a standard set of financials, which would then be publicly posted on the CRA website, much like charities already are required to do. The public would be empowered to gauge the effectiveness, financial integrity and the health of any union. Using electronic filing, the expense incurred by unions and by the federal government should be negligible.

(Motions deemed adopted, bill read the first time and printed)

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● (1520)

### COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE

#### PROCEDURE AND HOUSE AFFAIRS

**Mr. Joe Preston (Elgin—Middlesex—London, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, if the House gives its consent, I move that the third report of the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs presented to the House earlier today be concurred in.

**The Speaker:** Does the hon. member have the unanimous consent of the House for this motion.

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

(Motion agreed to)

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### PETITIONS

#### ABORIGINAL AFFAIRS

**Ms. Jean Crowder (Nanaimo—Cowichan, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I have two petitions to present.

The first petition is to do with the Stolen Sisters. The petitioners indicate that the Native Women's Association of Canada, through its Sisters in Spirit campaign, has identified 520 missing and murdered aboriginal women, whose cases go back to the 1970s.

The petitioners call upon the Parliament of Canada to ensure that the Native Women's Association receives sufficient funding to continue its important work of protecting women through its Sister in Spirit initiative and to invest in initiatives recommended by NWAC to help prevent more women from disappearing.

#### CHILD CARE

**Ms. Jean Crowder (Nanaimo—Cowichan, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, in the second petition, the petitioners indicate that child care is not accessible or affordable for Canadian families and is often of uncertain quality for young children. They state that child care creates jobs, makes Canada more competitive, helps achieve women's equality, builds local economies and is a recognized human right.

The petitioners call upon the House of Commons to legislate the right to universal access to child care and to provide multi-year funding to provincial and territorial governments to build a national

system of affordable, high quality, public and not-for-profit early childhood education and care accessible to all children. They say that the federal government must establish spending criteria and reporting mechanisms that ensure accountability to how the provinces and territories use federal funding to ensure quality, accessibility, universality and accountability and that acknowledge Quebec's right to develop social programs with adequate compensation from the federal government.

#### THE ENVIRONMENT

**Mr. David Tilson (Dufferin—Caledon, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I have a petition from a number of citizens of Canada who are opposed to the proposed megaquarry in Melancthon township in Dufferin country in Ontario, which will be the largest open-pit quarry in Canada at over 2,300 acres.

The petitioners are specifically concerned that this megaquarry will threaten freshwater fish species, particularly in the Pine river, and will further harm freshwater fish species and the regeneration, affecting Georgian Bay and Lake Huron.

The petitioners ask that the Government of Canada conduct an environmental assessment under the authority of the Canadian Environmental Act on the proposed Highland Companies' mega-quarry development.

#### HIV-AIDS

**Ms. Denise Savoie (Victoria, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to present two petitions on behalf of my constituents.

In the first petition, the petitioners ask the government to fix Canada's Access to Medicine Regime so that low-cost generic drugs can start flowing to developing countries. They say that 2.9 million people across the world died as a result of AIDS this year alone.

The petitioners call on the government to increase funding to fight HIV-AIDS globally and to support the creation of an international women's agency at the UN.

#### EMPLOYMENT INSURANCE

**Ms. Denise Savoie (Victoria, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I have a second petition on behalf of my constituents, who urge Parliament to introduce employment insurance emergency measures to respond to the economic crisis.

The petitioners ask the government to expand the eligibility criteria and the benefits.

#### HEALTH CARE

**Ms. Chris Charlton (Hamilton Mountain, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I am delighted to present a number of petitions today from people in my riding of Hamilton Mountain, all of which address the urgent need for a national pharmacare program in our country.



The petitioners point out that our goal ought to be to have a national drug plan that would enable all Canadians to enjoy equitable access to medicines while, at the same time, controlling the rising cost of drugs.

They are keenly aware of a report released by the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives, which concluded that the existing patchwork of private and public plans in Canada is inequitable, inefficient and costly. The report found that Canada was the third most expensive country for brand-name drugs because it deliberately inflates drug prices in order to attract pharmaceutical investments.

Instead of tackling the issue head on, the government is talking about privatization and user fees. Those are hardly the answers for an aging population that is already finding it difficult to make ends meet and whose retirement savings are again put at risk by yet another economic downturn.

The request by petitioners is as straightforward as it is urgent. They simply want the government to acknowledge that there is a sound economic case to be made for universal public medicare and then to get on with the job of developing and implementing a national pharmacare program.

While I know that the rules of the House do not allow me to endorse a petition, I will conclude by commending the Congress of Union Retirees of Canada for their timely leadership on this important issue.

• (1525)

#### ASBESTOS

**Mr. Pat Martin (Winnipeg Centre, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I am proud today to introduce a petition signed by literally thousands of Canadians from all across Canada who call upon Parliament to take note that asbestos is the greatest industrial killer that the world has ever known.

The petitioners point out that more Canadians now die from asbestos than all other industrial or occupational causes combined and yet Canada is still one of the largest producers and exporters of asbestos, dumping nearly 200,000 tonnes of this product per year into underdeveloped and third world countries. They also point out that Canada spends millions of dollars subsidizing the asbestos industry and blocking international efforts to curb its use.

Therefore, the petitioners call upon Parliament to ban asbestos in all of its forms and introduce a just transition program for asbestos workers and the communities in which they live. They call upon the government to end all subsidies of asbestos both in Canada and abroad and to stop blocking international health and safety conventions designed to protect workers from asbestos, such as the Rotterdam Convention.

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#### QUESTIONS ON THE ORDER PAPER

**Mr. Tom Lukiwski (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I ask that all questions be allowed to stand.

**The Speaker:** Is that agreed?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

#### Government Orders

**Ms. Chris Charlton:** Mr. Speaker, I wonder if you might seek unanimous consent to revert to the introduction of private members' bills.

**The Speaker:** Is there unanimous consent to revert to the introduction of private members' bills?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

\* \* \*

#### OLD AGE SECURITY ACT

**Ms. Chris Charlton (Hamilton Mountain, NDP)** moved for leave to introduce Bill C-318, An Act to amend the Old Age Security Act (Canada Pension Plan payments).

She said: Mr. Speaker, I will begin by thanking my colleague, the member for London—Fanshawe, and our party's tireless seniors' advocate for seconding this bill.

Saturday was National Seniors' Day but, sadly, that was in name only. There has not been a single new initiative from the Conservative government to help the most vulnerable seniors. A quarter of a million seniors live in poverty in our country today and many more are at risk of falling into poverty as the retirement savings plummet in this continuing economic downturn.

The one thing many can count on is the cost of living increase on their CPP. However, as it turns out, even that is not always theirs to keep. Often, even this marginal increase triggers a commensurate clawback of their GIS, leaving them no further ahead. That simply is not right.

The bill that I am introducing in the House today would prohibit any reduction in the guaranteed income supplement if the only change to one's income is as a result of CPP indexing.

While I know this bill is not enough to fix the larger imperative of lifting all seniors out of poverty, it would at least allow their net income to keep pace with the rising cost of inflation. If the government is serious about honouring the spirit of National Seniors' Day, it will immediately adopt this bill into law.

(Motions deemed adopted, bill read the first time and printed)

#### GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[English]

#### PREVENTING HUMAN SMUGGLERS FROM ABUSING CANADA'S IMMIGRATION SYSTEM ACT

The House resumed from September 30 consideration of the motion that Bill C-4, An Act to amend the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act, the Balanced Refugee Reform Act and the Marine Transportation Security Act, be read the second time and referred to a committee, and of the amendment

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**Ms. Chris Charlton (Hamilton Mountain, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I stand today to participate in the debate on Bill C-4, An Act to amend the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act, the Balanced Refugee Reform Act and the Marine Transportation Security Act.

Coming from a riding with a large number of immigrants and refugees, I certainly concur that there are many reforms that need to be made to our immigration and refugee system. I will give a few examples.

We need to increase resources to reduce the backlog in immigration applications, establish targets for on-time completion of family-class and spousal sponsorships, implement the NDP's once in a lifetime bill to expedite sponsorship of one family member, eliminate landing fees for new immigrants and processing fees for refugees, develop appeal processes for potential visitors to Canada, establish a refugee appeal division and streamline and accelerate the recognition of foreign credentials.

However, sadly, none of those essential reforms are found in the bill that is before us today. In fact, the bill would not even achieve what it purports it would, according to its short title, which is, "preventing human smugglers from abusing Canada's immigration system".

I am certain that no one in this House, or indeed in this country, would be opposed to preventing human smuggling and human trafficking. I certainly would not be. However, the bill would target the people who pay money to human smugglers to gain entry into Canada and would be completely ineffective in dealing with the smugglers themselves. It is not the smugglers who make the voyage by boat. They simply collect the money and put those who pay on the ship.

The same is true for human traffickers and others involved in organized crime. The bill barely mentions them. Why is that? It is because the bill has nothing to do with its stated intent of preventing human smuggling and everything to do with covering up for the government's mishandling of some recent high profile cases where a large number of people arrived in Canada by boat to claim refugee status. One example was the arrival of the *Ocean Lady* in 2009, and the more recent example was the arrival of the *Sun Sea* in August 2010. In both cases, the government was caught completely flat-footed. It simply failed to marshal the necessary resources to deal appropriately with the arrival of an influx of refugee claimants.

What was the government's response? Instead of dealing with the real issues at hand and instead of implementing evidence-based policies to deal fairly and responsibly with refugee claimants, the Conservatives have introduced legislation that would simply throw everyone in jail, and I do mean everyone. The bill clearly spells out that even children would be jailed for a year with no chance of being reunified with their families in the interim.

This is unconscionable. Detailing children, many of whom have escaped horrific conditions in their countries, is nothing short of immoral.

Studies from the U.K. show us what happens to incarcerated children. After just a few weeks of detention, profound behavioural changes are evident. Children begin to wet their beds, some become mute and many stop learning. They become withdrawn, under-

nourished and they lose weight. The psychological scars are real, lasting and well-documented.

However, the bill before us ignores all of that and would impose mandatory detention for an entire year and, perhaps most shamefully, the government has the gall to suggest that the bill is necessary to "protect" children. Nothing could be further from the truth. This legislation would further victimize children who have already suffered more dreadfully than most of us could even imagine.

Once again, it is clear that this is a government that thinks "evidence" is a dirty word. In fact, the government's dogged determination to renounce facts and evidence in favour of ideological posturing and wedge politics has become its hallmark. We saw it with the elimination of the long form census and we saw it again with the omnibus crime legislation that clearly flies in the face of all evidence and basic common sense.

The legislation before us today, too, underlines the government's complete disregard for reasoned, sensible, fact-based policy making.

The government is cynically playing to Canadians' fears, instead of acknowledging that the vast majority of Canadians are fair-minded people who want Canada to live up to its international obligations.

When Canadians see television coverage of United Nations' refugee camps around the world, they open up their hearts and often their wallets to assist children who are victims of civil wars, women who are raped and beaten in war-torn countries, and men who are escaping death threats and political persecution.

We are a compassionate society and we want to reach out to provide humanitarian assistance to the best of our abilities. We expect our government to do the same. In fact, the government is bound to do so, not just a representative of its citizenry, but because Canada is a signatory to the UN Convention on the Status of Refugees.

• (1530)

Article 31 of that convention states:

The Contracting States shall not impose penalties, on account of their illegal entry or presence, on refugees who, coming directly from a territory where their life or freedom was threatened in the sense of article 1, enter or are present in their territory without authorization, provided they present themselves without delay to the authorities and show good cause for their illegal entry or presence.



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Instead of living up to the letter or the spirit of that convention, the Conservative government is now proposing to do the exact opposite. It imposes penalties on refugees who are fleeing persecution. What is worse, it is doing so simply on the basis of the mode of transportation with which they arrive in Canada. Specifically targeted are people who arrive by boat. Why? Are people who arrive by boat any more dangerous to our national security than people who arrive by plane? Of course not. However, the government is not interested in creating well thought-out, evidence-based public policy. It is simply looking for a band-aid to paper over a public relations disaster of its own making when 478 people arrived by boat in Vancouver last summer to seek refuge from the civil war in Sri Lanka. Refugees will pay the price.

I am not saying that the government does not need to do due diligence, of course it does, but let us not demonize everyone who arrives in Canada by boat. In fact, we need to remind ourselves of the outpouring of support in our country for the 50,000-60,000 Vietnamese refugees who came to Canada in the late 1970s and early 1980s. We called them "the boat people". Support for them crossed all party lines and, yes, in an economic downturn. Here in Ottawa, it was Marion Dewar, the former mayor, member of Parliament and mother of the current member of Parliament for Ottawa Centre, who took a leadership role in assisting Vietnamese refugees to settle in our country. In my hometown of Hamilton, it was the former Conservative MPP and cabinet minister, John Smith, who championed their cause.

Studies have since been done to track the success of those members of the Vietnamese community who arrived in 1979. The studies found that within 10 years the unemployment rate among the Vietnamese boat people was 2.3% lower than the average unemployment rate in Canada. One in five had started businesses and 99% of them had successfully applied to become Canadian citizens. This is the kind of success that compassion brings. This is the kind of success on which our nation is built.

We also know what happens when we fail to act with compassion. An event from our less distinguished past is the Canadian government's refusal to admit a boat carrying Jewish people fleeing Hitler's Germany, a refusal that forced the MS *St. Louis* back to Europe where many of its passengers perished in the Holocaust.

The Minister of Citizenship, Immigration and Multiculturalism himself has expressed a sense of our country's responsibility for those passengers and spoke of a fundamental ethical obligation to help people in desperate situations fleeing for their lives. In the minister's words at the unveiling of the monument to commemorate the MS *St. Louis*, the monument was described as a "concrete perpetual expression of regret". The minister concluded by saying that "Canada will never close its doors to legitimate refugees who need our protection and who are fleeing persecution".

That is precisely the position that I wish were reflected in the bill that is before us today. The definition of a refugee is clear. Refugees must demonstrate that there is a well-founded fear of persecution, that there is a risk of death, injury, torture or some other unacceptable conduct or treatment that violates the common norms of civilized society. Such people need our help and we must establish fair rules to adjudicate such claims.

However, fairness is not what we find in the bill that is before us today. On the contrary, Bill C-4 very likely violates the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms and both the UN's refugee convention and the Convention on the Rights of the Child. It discriminates by creating two classes of refugees based on their mode of arrival. It imposes arbitrary detention without review. It denies the right to equal access to justice and it denies consideration of the best interests of a child.

The bill would not crack down on human smugglers. Rather, it would target legitimate refugees and the people who try to help them. It would punish vulnerable women, men and children. It would establish processes that are unclear, arbitrary, discriminatory and inhumane.

This legislation is neither fair nor balanced. Therefore, it is legislation that I simply cannot support.

• (1535)

**Mr. Harold Albrecht (Kitchener—Conestoga, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I listened with interest to my colleague speak about Bill C-4. It is unfortunate that at different times throughout her speech she mixed various aspects of history in an attempt to equate this with the turning back of the *St. Louis*. We are not talking about turning ships back. We are talking about implementing a fair and transparent system that will allow our public safety officials to ensure that these people are fleeing persecution, not prosecution.

Another difficulty I have is the innuendo that somehow the Conservatives are not compassionate. I assure the member that many of us on this side of the House have been personally involved in helping "the boat people", as she has referred to them. Many of us have had refugees stay in our homes. We have walked with them through those early days, weeks and months as they have adjusted to life here in Canada. There is no intention on our part to minimize the needs of legitimate refugees. Our intent is to ensure there is a fair and transparent system.

Does the hon. member not think it is important that our public safety officials have the tools at their disposal to ensure that these people are legitimate refugees and are not taking the place of legitimate refugees and would otherwise be kept out?

• (1540)

**Ms. Chris Charlton:** Mr. Speaker, I agree. I want to see a fair and transparent system for dealing with refugees. However, we have neither in the bill before us. It is not fair nor transparent.

First, we are talking about detention without any kind of mechanism for appeal. I spoke to that at length in my speech. How is that fair or transparent?

Second, the bill actually allows the minister to designate people retroactive to 2009. How is that fair and transparent?

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I was delighted to hear the member for Kitchener—Conestoga say it is imperative that we allow public servants to do their job. Therefore, I hope the member would agree that what is required for a fair and transparent refugee system to effectively deal with refugee claimants is adequate human resources. Otherwise, we will find more situations, as has often been the case for some in my riding of Hamilton Mountain, where the government has been unable to investigate some people's claims until they have been in the country for eight or nine years and this is the only home their children have ever known.

I agree that we need more resources. We must treat refugees with fairness using a system that is transparent and accountable.

**Mr. Ted Hsu (Kingston and the Islands, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I was struck by the point the hon. member made that Canadians are compassionate and have a history of reaching out and wanting to help those who are less fortunate around the world. She also commented on the fact that she finds it strange that we would single out a class of people arriving as refugees by a certain mode of transportation, people who represent only a small fraction of the total number of refugees.

I ask the hon. member to comment on whether she thinks that is fair.

**Ms. Chris Charlton:** Mr. Speaker, I obviously do not think that is fair. To suggest that a person's mode of transportation to Canada determines whether he or she is a legitimate refugee claimant is mind-boggling. This bill does not go quite as far as suggesting that, but it comes close. It primarily targets those people who would be arriving by boat. That clearly sets out two classes of refugees. That is not a fair nor a transparent system.

As I stated at the outset, the bill purports to help put an end to human smuggling. However, it is very light on dealing with human smugglers, human traffickers or people involved in organized crime. Rather, it puts the onus almost entirely on those who are seeking refugee status.

**Ms. Judy Foote (Random—Burin—St. George's, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I welcome the opportunity to speak to Bill C-4, An Act to amend the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act, the Balanced Refugee Reform Act and the Marine Transportation Security Act.

I have listened with great interest to the debate on Bill C-4. The Conservatives claim that the bill will crack down on human smugglers. Unfortunately, Bill C-4 will not do anything to deter human smugglers. Rather, it will unfairly target legitimate refugees desperately seeking asylum.

The true Conservative agenda to crassly capitalize on the worst stereotypes related to immigrants and refugees through this bill has been constantly displayed in this debate.

The bill before the House fails to achieve its intended goal of stopping human smuggling. However, it will succeed in violating international law and the Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

Audrey Macklin, professor at the Faculty of Law and Centre for Ethics at the University of Toronto, and Sean Rehaag, professor at York University, Osgoode Hall Law School and Centre for Refugee Studies have said that provisions such as those contained within the bill:

...flagrantly violates the Canadian Charter of Rights and Canada's international legal obligations.

[...]

It is inconceivable that the government was not advised that key elements...were unlawful. It is more likely that the government did not care.

The Conservative government claims that Bill C-4 will entrust the Minister of Public Safety with the power to designate the arrival of a group of individuals as a "human smuggling event" if the manner in which they enter the country is deemed contrary to Canada's immigration laws.

However, nothing in this legislation actually addresses a human smuggling event. Rather, the legislation deals with a designation of an "irregular arrival". Under this particular designation, all groups of two or more people could be designated under either of the two very broad criteria, which could in fact apply to the vast majority of refugee claimants.

Under the provisions of Bill C-4, individuals arbitrarily designated by the Minister of Public Safety would be prevented from appealing to the new refugee appeal division that was agreed to last spring. This process would provide all refugee claimants the opportunity to appeal for status.

Furthermore, legitimate refugees travelling aboard a vessel that is arbitrarily designated by the government as an irregular arrival will be prohibited for five years from applying for other forms of residence such as those on humanitarian and compassionate grounds. This measure unfairly and punitively punishes the victim.

Canada has an international obligation to protect legitimate refugees. However, because of the manner by which they arrive, the legislation unfairly targets legitimate refugees through its punitive and broad punishments in an effort to keep them from obtaining residency and protection.

How does the government expect those refugees who have suffered persecution and risked their lives to get to Canada? Not everyone can travel like the Minister of National Defence on Challenger jets and search and rescue helicopters.

Additionally, this legislation allows for individuals who are deemed legitimate refugees to be shipped back to their country of origin five years after their refugee status has been granted if the government decides they no longer need protection. Not only does this measure violate international law, it is cruel and seeks to disrupt any semblance of life they have made in Canada after fleeing persecution and could also put them back in danger.

The right to assimilation and naturalization are rights that are given to refugees under the United Nations Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees. Article 43 states:

The Contracting States shall as far as possible facilitate the assimilation and naturalization of refugees. They shall in particular make every effort to expedite naturalization proceedings and to reduce as far as possible the charges and costs of such proceedings.



• (1545)

This bill not only ignores Canada's international obligations to protect legitimate refugees seeking asylum but also seeks to further victimize their already difficult experiences. Bill C-4 would not hold human smugglers responsible for their illegal and heinous abuse of refugees. This draconian and backward piece of legislation is dangerous and attempts to criminalize the refugee instead of the smuggler. Once again the blind partnership of the Conservatives is masked in the name of public safety.

I would hope that if a bully beat up a victim the government would have the sense to understand that further punishing the victim would not dissuade the bully from abusing other victims. Similarly, when the government declares that human smugglers must be stopped and then goes on to introduce legislation that only inhumanely punishes refugees, human smugglers will not be dissuaded from smuggling more refugees. Unlike the government, Liberals are interested in pragmatic and evidence-based solutions to human smuggling that target the real criminals.

In this debate I have repeatedly heard Conservative members refer to refugees seeking asylum as “queue jumpers”. Let me make it clear that refugees are not queue jumpers. They are not economic immigrants. There is already a system to distinguish economic immigrants from legitimate refugees.

Last, they are not criminals. As the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees states, it is “important to recognize that...refugees are a distinct group with critical protection needs...It is not a crime to seek asylum”.

Central to any debate concerning refugees is a clear understanding of what it means to be a refugee. In 1967, Canada ratified the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees to the 1967 protocol. International legal protection revolves around the convention's important, clear and concise criteria for who constitutes a refugee. Unfortunately, it has become obvious while listening to this debate that many on the government side have not read this convention.

Article 1A(2) of the Convention relating to the Status of Refugees defines a refugee as anyone who:

As a result of events occurring before 1 January 1951 and owing to well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality and is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country; or who, not having a nationality and being outside the country of his former habitual residence as a result of such events, is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to return to it.

In the case of a person who has more than one nationality, the term “the country of his nationality” shall mean each of the countries of which he is a national, and a person shall not be deemed to be lacking the protection of the country of his nationality if, without any valid reason based on well-founded fear, he has not availed himself of the protection of one of the countries of which he is a national.

The government continues to ignore logic and evidence. Instead, it proclaims prison to be the cure for any activity it does not support. Does the government seriously think that threatening legitimate refugees with illegal detention will prevent refugees who are fleeing persecution and often death in their countries of origin from escaping to Canada?

Not only does this bill violate international law, it likely violates Canadian law. In the 1985 Supreme Court decision in *Singh*, the

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highest Canadian court ruled that the Charter of Rights and Freedoms applies not only to Canadians but to anyone who steps foot in Canada whether or not the person arrives legally. In Bill C-4 are provisions that enable the government to arbitrarily name refugee groups as designated foreign nationals and permit the illegal and unjust detention of said groups for up to 12 months regardless of whether they are legitimate refugees or not.

• (1550)

Section 9 of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms, under the heading of “Legal Rights”, ensures that everyone has the right not to be arbitrarily detained or imprisoned. Section 11, under the same heading, states that any person charged with an offence has a right to be tried within a reasonable time.

We know from the Supreme Court that the Charter of Rights and Freedoms applies to everyone on Canadian soil, whether here legally or not.

**Ms. Jinny Jogindera Sims (Newton—North Delta, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my colleague for her very clear and articulate expression of the major concerns with this legislation.

The bill purports to address human trafficking and human smuggling, yet we know that in Canada we already have the highest penalty that our courts could possibly give to those who engage in human trafficking and human smuggling, and that is a life sentence.

The question to my colleague is this: how does she feel this bill would address the legitimate needs of those who are fleeing from very dangerous grounds to seek refuge in a country like Canada?

• (1555)

**Ms. Judy Foote:** Mr. Speaker, clearly Bill C-4 would do nothing to help those who are seeking refuge. That is my concern with the bill.

There are legitimate concerns. People are being persecuted, and they need to look to a country like Canada to deal with their concerns and to be there when they are looking for a place of refuge and safety.

I am concerned that the bill would take that avenue away from them. It would take away the opportunity to find a place of refuge in a country where people understand that they are being persecuted and know only too well how important it is to respond to the needs of people around the world who understand that Canada is a good place to live.

**Hon. Judy Sgro (York West, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, this very much seems like an issue of ideology and punishment, despite the government's statements that it is interested in targeting the human smugglers who are clearly exploiting very vulnerable people. I would like to hear some comments from my hon. colleague on that.

**Ms. Judy Foote:** Mr. Speaker, I think my colleague is absolutely right with respect to this piece of legislation. It is very much in keeping with the ideology that has been put forward by the government on other pieces of legislation.

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We are talking about not treating people with respect. We are talking about sending people back to a country where we know they will be persecuted further. We are talking about not reaching out and making sure that we are doing everything we can as a country to help people in these situations, knowing full well that if they are returned to their country, they may even risk death.

My concern here is that we are going down the same path as we are with the crime legislation, through which everyone would be thrown in jail, no matter how small the crime or whether it is a first-time mistake. We would build megaprisons to accommodate Canadians when instead we should be looking at prevention. We should be trying to help Canadians avoid going to prison.

We are going down the same path with Bill C-4. We are not looking out for the best interests of Canadians in the case of the megaprisons and the crime legislation, nor of those who are looking to us to help in terms of their safety and who want to come to Canada.

They are reaching out to us. We should be open and receptive to them instead of looking at them and sending them back and treating them like victims.

This bill would do nothing to help deal with human smuggling and human smugglers. Instead, we would be making victims again of those coming to us looking for refuge.

[Translation]

**Ms. Françoise Boivin (Gatineau, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, before I begin, I would like to congratulate and thank the hon. Liberal member who just spoke about Bill C-4. A large part of what she said is similar to what I wish to say.

To continue along that route, I would like to say that since May 2—the day I was elected to Parliament—and since we started sitting, I have been saddened by the fact that the legislation tabled by those on the other side sometimes contains good things, but more often than not, unfortunately, it simply divides those here. We can all support a bill that protects refugees against human trafficking; we can all work together to ensure that a pedophile never touches another child; we can all agree that someone who has committed a very serious crime should spend a long time in jail and should not easily receive a pardon, and so on.

However, all of these bills before us simply divide us: we are either for or against human trafficking, for or against the government. And we must not try to make any changes. I call this government the “photo-op government”—splashy headlines in the paper, big in-your-face news to show that the government is working for us. But, really, none of this is going to have the desired effect.

We must not forget that a similar bill, Bill C-49, was introduced during the last parliament. And that is one issue I have with us as politicians—it seems that things only get moving once an event is picked up by the media. If it is not in the news, we do not talk about it or deal with it. This bill was drafted following a media event.

I just got out of a meeting that I had to cut short with women who are part of the Sisters In Spirit, which has lost its funding. These are mothers who have lost a child, whose children have disappeared, and we are not taking care of them. They are not asking for the moon.

They are asking for peanuts so that they can continue their searches. But unfortunately, that does not make the headlines in the *Globe and Mail* or the *Toronto Star*. However, big ships like the *MV Ocean Lady* and the *MV Sun Sea* that arrived on the shores of British Columbia in 2009 and 2010 made the news. It was in our face. Everyone said that something had to be done and that a bill needed to be introduced, but they did not take the consequences into consideration, nor did they ensure that the bill would achieve the desired effect.

That is the problem in general with this government. Of course it was shocking to watch the news and see 500 Tamils arriving, as well as the *MV Ocean Lady*, which had 76 on board. I had a television show and I remember people talking to us about it. It was terrible. Rumours were swirling all around. It is incredible, but I am still responding to people who ask me how it is possible that, in Canada, a refugee makes more money than a retired Canadian. I wonder how they come up with that. Then I realize that people have been misled for years and years. In fact, some people in Canada honestly believe that every refugee arriving here in Canada receives around \$1,900 a month. Come on. A person would receive \$1,900 just for arriving in Canada as a refugee? We would give refugees that much while our seniors and many other people are having a hard time making ends meet? It almost makes you want to go to another country just to come back as a refugee.

That is not the reality for refugees. Refugees are people who leave their countries because their lives are in danger. These are not people who decide to come to Canada on vacation. They come here for their safety and because we have a reputation—poor us—as a supposedly welcoming, fair and open country that encourages differences and wants people to have more. Canada is a country that ensures that the people who come here are not starving, although I sometimes have doubts about this when I see the number of children living below the poverty line and the number of seniors who are abused or who cannot make ends meet.

● (1600)

As a legislator and with my background as a lawyer, I wonder about the purpose of this bill. The government wants to wipe out human trafficking and we all agree with that. Let them stop claiming otherwise. No one is in favour of human trafficking. I do not think any of my colleagues would support human trafficking. Would anyone in the House support it? If so, I would ask them to please raise their hands. Why? Because we definitely disagree. Do we want someone who is not a real refugee, someone whose life is not in danger, who does not meet the criteria of the existing legislation, to come to Canada to take advantage of our extremely generous system? We do not want that either. I would ask you, Mr. Speaker, to ask those in favour of that to raise their hands. No one wants that.

The government said that it was concerned that many of these people had ties to the Tamil Tigers, a group on the list of terrorist organizations. I said to myself that our friends opposite were introducing their next buzzword: terrorist. This word scares everyone. Anyone who reads the bill will think that the government is protecting their safety, ensuring that people with ties to terrorists do not sneak into our country under the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act.



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Why is nothing done when people arrive in great numbers at airports? Is there anything more dramatic than watching refugees arriving by boat on television? But that is not the case for refugees who arrive at an airport chock full of passengers from all over. Someone told me that thousands of refugees arrive at Canadian airports. The number of refugees who arrive by boat is smaller. This bill, once again, attempts to mask the reality and give a false impression. It gives even great powers to the Minister of Immigration under the guise of public safety.

What struck me when they introduced Bill C-4, the former Bill C-49—this is not the first time that our Conservative friends have tried to introduce such a bill—is that it was introduced by the Minister of Public Safety. Why? Because they are trying to send a message that our security is at stake, that terrorists are streaming into Canada. I do not say this flippantly, as though I could not care less about terrorism. That is not at all the case. But let us call a spade a spade, and identify the true terrorists. The trouble is that, in real life, when you cry wolf too often, people stop believing and will not pay attention when there is a real terrorist threat. That worries me. They are trying to portray all refugees as potential terrorists. Unfortunately, that is more or less the general impression.

I hosted a public affairs show on television and radio before I came here. In my practice as a lawyer, I still have frequent contact with the general public, at least in my region, the national capital region. I can say that people were automatically making the equation that a refugee is a terrorist. If someone is hiding, it is because they are running from something. People forget to consider that there is more to it.

The bill may contain some clauses that are worthy of being examined, but, as always, the government is using a sledgehammer to kill a fly. As a lawyer, my primary concern is that this will end up before the courts some day. I had the same concern about Bill C-10. If the government wanted to use its bills to make improvements, protect Canadians better, eliminate human trafficking and ensure that criminals receive punishments that suit their crimes, that would be good. The danger is that with bills like this, it is the opposite, and there will be never-ending cases before the courts. In the end, the answer will be that this violates existing treaties and the charter. The government had better not respond that it intends to abolish the charter one day. I do not think so. I think that Canadians are extremely happy with the charter. If a government adopts unconstitutional legislation, it will be contested.

• (1605)

At some point, the House will end up debating this issue again, since we will be back at square one and the problem of human trafficking will not have been resolved.

[English]

**Ms. Jinny Jogindera Sims (Newton—North Delta, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, the point I want to make is that Canada has a very proud history of being welcoming and very inclusive, not only to new immigrants, but to those who arrive here as refugees. As Canadians we value that image the world holds of us as being very compassionate and caring.

One key concern I have with this legislation is this sends a message that Canada is prepared not only to break some of its own

laws but to break some UN conventions. How does the member think this legislation is going to impact the image Canada has abroad?

• (1610)

[Translation]

**Ms. Françoise Boivin:** Mr. Speaker, the hon. member has asked an excellent question.

As I was saying, further to the legal analysis of this bill, my biggest concern is that there will be many court challenges related either to the charter or to the UN's Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees. Any challenges related to the UN's Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees, which we have signed, would threaten Canada's image.

Our government speaks on our behalf. The government is not just the Conservatives. The government is all Canadians from coast to coast to coast, not just the small 39% of 61% of the vote in the last election represented by the Conservatives.

It is clear that the image of Canada will suffer.

[English]

**Mr. Ted Hsu (Kingston and the Islands, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, it strikes me as ironic that the Conservative government seems to care a lot about finances, but it does not seem to want to talk about the cost of its legislation. It seems to me this legislation, being unconstitutional, would just result in a lot of court challenges and a lot of work at the Supreme Court, and at the end of the day a lot of very smart people working a long time with the end result of no change.

I wonder if the member would care to comment about that.

**Ms. Françoise Boivin:** Mr. Speaker, I love my colleague's lawyers, but they will not love what I am going to say right now. I wish they would not have that much work, but my sneaking suspicion is that because of the government, they will have so much work, especially those constitutionalists and all those specialists on international conventions. Definitely, they cannot just lie there and do absolutely nothing when we see so many inequities that are created through this piece of legislation. I am sad.

[Translation]

When I was a labour lawyer, I often joked with the employers that I represented that, if I did my job well when establishing a collective agreement between the two parties, they would never need me again because the terms would be so clear and precise. I can say that the parties involved in all the collective agreements that I helped to draft rarely needed my help to interpret those agreements later because we found the words to say what the parties wanted to say at the negotiating table. However, when we draft bills such as this one, unfortunately, it leaves a lot of room for interpretation and inequality. We are going to find ourselves before the courts more often than not and it will cost the government a fortune.

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[English]

**Mr. Harold Albrecht (Kitchener—Conestoga, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, a couple of times today there has been the innuendo that somehow we are cutting back on the number of asylum seekers and refugees that we accept. I want to remind Canadians who are watching that the Balanced Refugee Reform Act that was passed recently adds 20% or 2,500 refugees per year, so we are up to 14,500 refugees per year that we are accepting.

I am wondering if my hon. colleague would correct the record. In terms of Canada's reputation in the world, it is quite strong. We receive many refugees and the Canadian population needs to be reminded of that.

**Ms. Françoise Boivin:** Mr. Speaker, it is so easy, but I will not make fun of the comment because Bill C-4 does not exist yet. So, in a sense it is going to be interesting to see how it unfolds after and what type of challenges it is going to bring on.

[Translation]

The point here is not the number of refugees. What saddens me is that there are such problems in some countries, where people fear for their lives and need to find a host country like Canada.

My concern about Bill C-4 does not have to do with the number of refugees. If someone is a legitimate refugee, I would hope that we would not prevent them from entering our country.

[English]

**Mr. Glenn Thibeault (Sudbury, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I rise today to voice my strong opposition to Bill C-4. The bill violates the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, as well as Canada's international obligations, such as the UN Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees.

The Conservatives are well aware that the bill is unlikely to stand up to a legal challenge if it is enacted.

However, the government feels the need to push the bill through the House of Commons, wasting the opportunity to ensure that Canada's immigration system really protects refugees and ensures fairness, and taking up time on the parliamentary calendar while Canada's economy stalls.

The bill would concentrate far too much power in the hands of the Minister of Citizenship, Immigration and Multiculturalism. He would be able to designate refugees as irregular arrivals, which would subject them to new rules, creating a second, lower class of refugees. These irregular arrivals would then be subject to mandatory detention, with no review for a year, except for at the discretion of the minister.

In effect, the minister would become judge and jury for any group of refugees which he designates.

Are there problems with human smuggling in Canada? Certainly. However, the problem lies with traffickers and smugglers, those people who profit off of people's suffering.

However, this bill would ignore those people and, instead, would target legitimate refugees, people who, by definition, have left their country of residence for fear of persecution, people who have given up everything because they fear for their lives, people who believe

Canada has not only a legal obligation but a moral obligation to protect. Are these the people who the government really wants to victimize?

As I said, there are problems with human smuggling and trafficking in Canada. However, the major problem that we have with human smuggling has nothing to do with inadequate legislation, but with support and funding of the RCMP. If the government wants to address the issue of human smuggling, we should ensure that people on the front lines have all the resources they need to do their job.

Current legislation already allows for life sentences for individuals convicted of human smuggling. New legislation is not needed. What we need are the tools for better implementation of existing laws, not additional draconian legislation.

Perhaps the most disturbing provision of the bill would be the ability to arrest and detain any permanent resident or foreign national on suspicion of serious crime, criminality or organized crime.

Think carefully about what this would mean. This provision would mean that any person in Canada who is not a citizen can become detained on the mere suspicion of criminality, with no need for proof or evidence. Simple suspicion would become enough to not only arrest but to also indefinitely detain people.

The rule of law in a democracy is founded on the principle that the police's powers of arrest and detention are only legitimate if there are reasonable grounds for arrest; specifically, the notion of reasonable grounds means that there must be an objective component to the notion of suspicion. This objective component is met by evidence. Suspicion alone is subjective. There would be no way to prove whether that suspicion is warranted or not, and this would leave the system open to abuse.

While Canadian citizens would not be affected by this provision, this would set a worrying precedent. I am reminded of the famous quote by Martin Niemöller, which ends:

—they came for me—

and there was no one left to speak out for me.

Once we accept that arrest and detention without an objective reason is justified for foreign nationals and permanent residents, what is to stop the same government extending the provisions to include Canadian citizens?

We cannot turn a blind eye now and hope that these disturbing changes are never applied to us. If we believe that arrest and detention without objective evidence is unacceptable when applied to ourselves, our friends and our families, then surely it is unacceptable when applied to people who immigrated, either permanently or temporarily, to Canada.

How would our government react to news that a Canadian citizen was arrested and detained abroad simply on the suspicion of criminality?



• (1615)

I believe that the government, rightly, would be outraged and would call on the foreign government to provide evidence of any wrongdoing or release the person in question immediately. Canada should be a world leader in human rights and freedom, not a laggard whose legislation we could criticize in other states.

The NDP is not alone in opposing this legislation. Amnesty International has said that the bill:

—falls far short of Canada's international human rights and refugee protection obligations and will result in serious violations of the rights of refugees and migrants.

The Canadian Bar Association, the voice of the legal profession in Canada, has stated that the previous version of this bill, introduced in the previous Parliament:

—violates Charter protections against arbitrary detention and prompt review of detention, as well as Canada's international obligations respecting the treatment of persons seeking protection.

The bill is opposed to the UN Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees which states:

The Contracting States shall not impose penalties, on account of their illegal entry or presence, on refugees who, coming directly from a territory where their life or freedom was threatened in the sense of article 1, enter or are present in their territory without authorization, provided they present themselves without delay to the authorities and show good cause for their illegal entry or presence.

It is clear that the government is on the wrong side, both on its legal obligations to the Charter of Rights and Freedoms and various international treaties, as well as its moral obligations to the people fleeing persecution.

Should this law pass, the government would undoubtedly face years and years of expensive legal battles in the Supreme Court. Now is the time for the government to realize that this bill is flawed and to invest in the policing resources which will crack down on human smugglers and protect vulnerable refugees.

• (1620)

[Translation]

**Mrs. Sadia Groguhé (Saint-Lambert, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I congratulate my colleague on his speech.

My question for him has to do with the international consequences this bill would have for our country, particularly with respect to its unconstitutional nature.

[English]

**Mr. Glenn Thibeault:** Mr. Speaker, there are many things that could come to play with this type of legislation out there already. We could look at some of the organizations that are already commenting on this legislation. For example, the Canadian Council for Refugees has called for this bill to be scrapped entirely. Noa Mendelsohn Aviv, the equality program director with the Canadian Civil Liberties Association, has issued a scathing attack on the government's attitude toward refugees generally, and on Bill C-4, in particular, stating that there is no need for the draconian measures contemplated.

As mentioned earlier in my speech, the Canadian Bar Association stated that it did not support this legislation in its previous form in Bill C-49 as it violated the charter protections against arbitrary

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detention and prompt review of detention as well as Canada's international obligations respecting the treatment of persons seeking protection. So there are many organizations out there that are talking about the impact this would have on Canada's reputation.

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, one could wonder why the government would have brought in Bill C-4 in the first place. I go back to the ship, the *Ocean Lady*. It comes to port and then on the back of the ship we see the Prime Minister of Canada saying that we are upset at these profiteers and smugglers.

I have had the opportunity to read the bill as I am sure the member has, and I am convinced that the number of profiteers who will be penalized and become victims of this bill is probably pretty close to zero, if not at zero, and that the real victims here will be the individuals who are genuine refugees seeking asylum in order to protect their lives and continue to live. They look to Canada as a caring, compassionate country, and even the government member himself tried to say that there is value to refugees. There is more than just value to refugees. They are a part of what has made Canada what it is today.

I would look to my colleague and ask him how many profiteers he feels will actually get persecuted or be a victim of this particular legislation. I do not see any profiteers. Does he see who will be the victims? Will it be the profiteers or will it be the refugees themselves?

• (1625)

**Mr. Glenn Thibeault:** Mr. Speaker, the hon. member raised a very good point as to who would be affected the most by this legislation. I believe it would be the refugees who would be detained for a year. What would happen if there were children involved? What if the refugees came here in a plane rather than a boat? Would they be fine?

There are many things we can talk about in relation to this, but the member also brought up the point that we already have legislation in place. A smuggler who is caught will go to jail for life. What are we doing? We are not giving the RCMP the necessary resources to go after and capture the smugglers. The RCMP officers are fantastic. They can do their job phenomenally if we actually give them the resources to do their job. However, this legislation makes sure that when refugees come here they will be detained for a year and will be treated like criminals, when they were probably fleeing a situation that was very similar to that.

[Translation]

**Ms. Paulina Ayala (Honoré-Mercier, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, last summer, a small cargo ship entered Canadian waters off the coast of British Columbia, where it was intercepted by the RCMP. There were 492 Tamils crammed on board, including women and children. This is the particular case the government is talking about, since no other cases apply to its Bill C-4. The government claims to be concerned about the origin of the passengers seeking asylum when arriving by boat. It is worried that among these legitimate refugees are Tamil Tigers, members of a terrorist organization that has been banned in Canada.

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The summer before that, a ship carrying 66 Tamils was intercepted on the shores of Vancouver. The government arrested them all and detained them for months, alleging that a third of them were Tamil Tigers sent to infiltrate Canada. Unfortunately for the Conservatives, their concerns were unfounded and they had to release the refugees. This is the example the government is using to justify its bill. This bill is based on unfounded concerns. Bill C-4 is based on a prejudice that has been refuted.

The public is not sympathetic to the reality facing refugees. Surveys show that 46% of Canadians believe that immigration has a negative effect on the country. When asked specifically about Tamils, closer to 50% of people want them deported back to Sri Lanka. The Conservative government knows these statistics. And this populist bill proves that the government is not afraid to divide the public on the basis of false perceptions. It also demonstrates that it prefers to increase fear among those who are afraid of the unknown instead of informing and educating the public and ensuring that Canadians live in harmony with one another.

This attitude is surprising for Canada. More than 20% of Canadians are immigrants. There are countless descendants of immigrants. Approximately 20,000 Sri Lankans have immigrated to Canada because of the devastation of a 25-year civil war and the 2004 tsunami. Last year, more than 280,000 immigrants received their permanent resident status in Canada. Bill C-4 is aimed at the 492 Tamils who arrived by boat, simply because the government believes that two of them had ties to a terrorist organization. We are talking about two people out of 280,000 immigrants that year. And the government thinks that justifies its ideological laws.

The saddest part is that this is all it takes for the public to continue fearing all other immigrants. Because their government is so afraid of refugees that it locks them up, Canadians have every reason not to trust newcomers. Bill C-4 does not fix anything, but it is still important because it is a very powerful symbol. It widens the gap between Canadians and certain classes of immigrants. It contradicts the open-mindedness of the majority of Canadians by siding with their more radical compatriots. Those 492 refugees suffered through exile and a horrific voyage, and then they were imprisoned because two of them posed a threat. Because they were cheated by a smuggler, they were treated as criminals. And if that were not enough, the government is forcing dishonour upon more than 6 million Canadian immigrants by reinforcing this idea that it is reasonable to have doubts when it comes to immigrants.

An article published in *The Walrus* magazine, which we all received in our offices in June 2011, reminds the government that this anti-immigration trend is similar to other sad initiatives like the Chinese head tax during the construction of the railway and the internment of Germans, Turks, Bulgarians and Japanese Canadians during the two world wars in the 20th century. The government's new approach recalls two other particularly ugly moments in Canadian history. In 1914, a Japanese plane carrying 400 passengers from India landed in Vancouver, but the refugees were denied entry to Canada and were deported to India. Twenty of them were killed upon their return.

• (1630)

Twenty-five years later, a ship carrying over 900 Jews fleeing the Nazis was turned away, forcing the refugees back to Europe, where over a third of them would die in the Holocaust.

These communities, whether South Asian or Jewish, which are now considered pillars of Canadian society, have experienced their share of discrimination and stigmatization. It is inconceivable in 2011, when Canada is not at war or threatened by mass immigration, that the government would propose new measures that amount to profiling and discrimination. It is even less conceivable that these initiatives would be considered urgent, in contrast to Canada's values and commitments when it comes to respecting and promoting every individual's rights and freedoms.

Such abuses seem to come about every time Canadian society is threatened by a crisis. Immigrants become scapegoats. The popular belief, which is unfortunately confirmed by this government's unjustifiable actions, is that immigrants steal jobs and ruin the standard of living in our neighbourhoods.

Nearly half the population believes the common perception that immigration increases the crime rate. Although many Canadians realize that immigration is a powerful tool for developing our society, the government chooses to fuel fear and pit classes of people against one another. Instead of promoting openness and education, the government chooses to fuel division and isolation.

In fact, every known indicator paints an entirely different picture. In fact, the mass arrival of Europeans since the 1970s has been accompanied with a notable decline in the crime rate. In Toronto, immigrants make up more than half the population and the crime rate has dropped by 50% since 1991. The crime rates in that city are also lower than the national average. A study conducted by the University of Toronto over a period of more than 30 years found that with increased immigration comes a decrease in the crime rate. These observations were made in every immigrant group, regardless of where they came from.

But the Conservative government prefers to govern based on public opinion polls rather than on facts. It prefers to spread prejudice by discriminating against certain immigrant groups, in this case the Sri Lankans who arrived by boat, over championing truth and fairness among Canadian citizens.

The Conservative government is trying to present certain groups of immigrants as acceptable and others as a threat. Such is the nature of Bill C-4, legislation that makes misinformation the norm and stigmatization a rule.



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Studies by Statistics Canada go even further. They show that in the Montreal and Toronto regions, the crime rates are inversely proportional to the immigration rates. In other words, immigration acts as a safety net against crime. Researchers have all been encouraged by these observations that refute old perceptions. However, these same researchers question the government's attempts to perpetuate these myths about immigration. Immigrants are motivated by a great determination to integrate into Canadian society and by their desire to understand their host society.

The Conservative government claims that it must take this action to denounce the abuses committed by these smugglers, the real criminals behind all this. It is not by putting the only witnesses behind bars and acting as a torturer that the government will ensure fairness in the immigration process and it is certainly no way to ensure the safety of Canadians.

• (1635)

[English]

**Hon. Lynne Yelich (Minister of State (Western Economic Diversification), CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the member talks about targeting smugglers. We are targeting smugglers because of the abuse of Canada's immigration system and how it has been undermined by human smugglers. Her statistics do not tell how generous our program for the refugee resettlement is and she distorts our policies.

Our resettlement program is one of the most generous ones in the developed world. Each year we resettle 10,000-12,000 refugees through government assisted privately sponsored refugee programs. Globally, countries with resettlement programs resettle about 100,000 refugees, which means we take one out of every ten refugees resettled. These refugees often spend many years, sometimes decades, in squalid refugee camps or urban slums.

To suggest that we are not being generous with our immigration and our refugee system is false and very misleading. We are trying to ensure there are no queue jumpers. I would like the member to be more generous in how our refugee system is one of the best in the world.

[Translation]

**Ms. Paulina Ayala:** Mr. Speaker, indeed, we must continue on that course: we must be generous in welcoming those who suffer and not criminalize those who suffer even more. We must punish those who take advantage of the suffering of others. I therefore agree with my dear colleague who spoke earlier. We must be even more generous because people are suffering in other parts of the world, and when they come to live here they will contribute to our society and enrich it.

I am an immigrant, as are several of my colleagues in this House. What we are saying is that the seeds of prejudice are sown when there is a crisis that affects the country. Scapegoats are sought and, instead of the smugglers being punished, it is the people they have smuggled who are punished—the ones who were living in miserable conditions and left their country in distress.

This bill does not attack the real offenders.

[English]

**Mr. Ted Hsu (Kingston and the Islands, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, it strikes me that Bill C-4 is an example of legislation by news headline. I wonder if the government would really want to bother to go through the work of introducing the bill only to have it struck down by a court challenge if they did not get to have any photo ops on the beach in front of ships. It reminds me how the news tends to focus on airplane crashes when on an average day probably more people starve to death in this world than die from airplane crashes.

Would the member care to comment on that?

• (1640)

[Translation]

**Ms. Paulina Ayala:** Mr. Speaker, I understand what my colleague is saying. We are talking about the suffering of people who will take very serious risks. They leave on a ship in conditions that none of us would be able to tolerate. They even bring their children because there is too much suffering.

Canada has signed certain international conventions on human rights and we have the ability to accept these people and to give them a chance in life. That is our role as a country. We are a model country and we should not tarnish our reputation. It is part of our history. We must protect and develop our reputation.

I do not believe that any thought has been put into this bill. I put myself in the place of someone who has faith. How can those who have faith support this type of bill when we are morally bound to accept those who suffer and to have compassion for others? It is a complete contradiction. It does not correspond to our views on life, love for our neighbours and so forth. That proves that we must attack this type of bill that lacks compassion.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Barry Devolin):** It is my duty, pursuant to Standing Order 38, to inform the House that the questions to be raised tonight at the time of adjournment are as follows: the hon. member for Chambly—Borduas, Flooding in Montérégie; the hon. member for Nanaimo—Cowichan, Child Care; the hon. member for Halifax West, G8 Summit.

**Mr. François Choquette (Drummond, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I am happy to speak about Bill C-4, the Preventing Human Smugglers from Abusing Canada's Immigration System Act. My explanation will show Canadians that there are very clear differences in the approach to governance taken by the Conservative government and that taken by the official opposition.

First, Bill C-4 purports to prevent human smugglers from taking advantage of the Canadian immigration system. How ironic. In reality, the bill almost exclusively targets refugee claimants arriving in Canada. This bill clearly shows this government's approach, which is designed to create fear in our society and exploit the misery of certain foreign nationals for political gain. The government is introducing knee-jerk legislation that is not based on fact, law or reason.

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The incredible number of organizations working to assist refugees that are denouncing this bill provides indisputable evidence that the bill is not at all logical. I would like to mention a few of these organizations.

First, the Canadian Council for Refugees asked that this bill be withdrawn. Amnesty International—these are very prestigious organizations involved in the protection of people and refugees—has stated that Bill C-4 falls far short of Canada's international human rights and refugee and immigrant protection obligations. A program director for the Canadian Civil Liberties Association severely criticized the Conservative government's attitude with regard to refugees in general and Bill C-4 in particular, stating that this bill is draconian. He clearly said “draconian”. I am not the one who said it, but I agree.

All these objections would be sufficient to change the mind of any person of good faith. However, that is not all. There are still other groups that oppose the negative impact that this bill would have.

The Canadian Bar Association has also spoken out against this bill and the previous one, stating that it did not support the legislation in its previous form because it violated the charter protection against arbitrary detention and denied the prompt review of detention. We cannot just imprison people without reasonable grounds, without incontrovertible evidence. The bill also violates Canada's international obligations respecting the treatment of persons seeking protection. In addition, a group of experts from the Centre for Refugee Studies has described this bill as draconian. Yes, that word again.

As we can see, many organizations that come from various walks of life have spoken out against the measure being proposed by the Conservative government.

I would like to take a look at some of the key aspects of the bill so that Canadians can see for themselves the negative side of Bill C-4. This bill would give the Minister of Immigration the power to designate, at his sole discretion—imagine that, his sole discretion—a group of refugees in Canada as irregular arrivals. What is more, he could do that based on mere suspicion, as I said earlier, and based on a definition of “group” that is not specified in the bill.

Does this not give far too much power to just one individual? This measure presents a serious risk of abuse. If this bill passes, such discretionary power could lead to abuses for which the Conservative government would be solely responsible.

Once designated foreign nationals receive that title, they are then subject to all kinds of special rules, some of which are discriminatory. To begin, I will focus on a few such rules.

Once designated as irregular arrivals, all designated foreign nationals, including children—everyone heard me correctly, including children—will be mandatorily detained on arrival or upon designation for up to one year. Is that any way to treat the victims of smugglers? The real criminals here are the smugglers. Again, is that any way to treat victims—to throw the entire family, including children, in jail for a year? How shameful. What a black mark on our international reputation as a humane, welcoming society.

In addition, the Canadian Immigration and Refugee Board would not even review their detention for one year. Designated foreign nationals cannot be released during that time.

And that is not all. When they are released, designated foreign nationals will still have their right to apply for permanent residence suspended.

• (1645)

Also, designated foreign nationals cannot file a humanitarian and compassionate application or apply for a temporary resident permit for five years. Furthermore, designated foreign nationals cannot receive refugee travel documents, which means that they cannot travel outside of Canada for at least five years after being accepted as a refugee. And that is very serious.

To sum up, this means that all designated refugee claimants will be separated from their families and unable to travel to see them for at least five years. It is unbelievable. Six years is even worse. Is that how important family is to this Conservative government? Is this any way to demonstrate our family values? I do not think so.

The Conservative government seems to have a troubling tendency to diminish the importance of the family values that Canadians hold dear. Let me give an example. Since this government came to power in 2006, we have seen a marked decrease in the number of family-class visas that have been issued. There has also been a dramatic drop in the number of refugee visas issued by the government.

To conclude, I will go over some of the main problems with Bill C-4. It penalizes refugees. It was presented as legislation to target smugglers, but most of these provisions punish refugees instead of smugglers. I already said that refugees, including children, would be detained for one year without any possibility of an independent review. Under Bill C-4, refugees would be victims three times over: first, when they are persecuted in their home country, second, by the smugglers, and lastly, by Canada. That makes no sense.

I also spoke about the fact that Bill C-4 creates challenges for family reunification, which is the main objective announced by the government. It denies refugees the right to apply for permanent residence for five years, thus preventing them from reuniting with their families, including their children. This is a violation of the right to family guaranteed in the Convention on the Rights of the Child, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights.

The government must restore Canada's international reputation, not only by ensuring the proper treatment of refugees who come to this country, but also by improving its system to allow a greater number of refugees to settle in Canada. There are millions of people in refugee camps and in dangerous situations around the world. We must help more of them by giving them shelter and providing security.



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Canada needs fair and balanced refugee legislation. This legislation is neither fair nor balanced, and the official opposition will work hard to amend or defeat it. The Conservatives should focus on enforcing Canada's already existing legislation against human smuggling. The government should give law enforcement agencies and the Immigration and Refugee Board the resources they need to address human trafficking and human smuggling. That is what we need. We should be focusing on enforcing the existing legislation.

Those are the solutions proposed by the New Democrats: fair and balanced solutions that attack the real problems, the real criminals—the smugglers—and not the victims.

• (1650)

[English]

**Mrs. Susan Truppe (Parliamentary Secretary for Status of Women, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, our government received a strong mandate from Canadians to take fair, reasonable and tough action to prevent the abuse of Canada's immigration system by human smugglers.

Canada always opens its doors to those who work hard and play by the rules. However, we must crack down on those who seek to take advantage of our generosity and often for financial gain. The preventing human smugglers from abusing Canada's immigration system act would send a clear message to individuals overseas thinking about smuggling people that they should not to do it.

I encourage the NDP to listen to Canadians and support this important legislation.

[Translation]

**Mr. François Choquette:** Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the hon. member for her question and comments. Under current legislation, human smuggling is already punishable by life in prison. That is what needs to be worked on. Resources need to be given to existing agencies to enforce the legislation properly.

What is more, Bill C-4 might violate section 15 of the charter on equality before the law. Bill C-4 would create a new category of second-class refugees who would be denied permanent resident status and a temporary resident permit and would not be accepted on humanitarian grounds or have the right to apply for permanent residence.

We must focus our energy on existing legislation, under which human smuggling is already punishable by life in prison.

[English]

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I find it amazing that a Conservative member of Parliament would stand, read a statement and then sit down and it is supposed to be a question. It is the Conservative line. The Conservatives know what it is they want to say. They know what it is they want to tell Canadians in terms of the props. I would suggest what they are really doing is promoting prejudiced attitudes to the detriment of our society as a whole especially going forward.

There is nothing wrong with refugees. The message the government is trying to give to a selected percentage of the population is that Canadians should have this fear factor about refugees. If this bill had been in place three or four years ago, would

it have made a difference? This legislation would not have made one ounce of difference. What it does is it plays upon people's fear.

The member spoke so well with regard to Bill C-4. Would he agree that the legislation fuels prejudice more than it attacks the profiteers and human smugglers?

[Translation]

**Mr. François Choquette:** Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the hon. member for his very astute comments and his question. Unfortunately, all this bill does is attack the wrong people. Obviously there are problems, as hon. members have already mentioned. In addition to being exploited by smugglers, the refugees are already victims in their own countries, where they suffer persecution. As a result of this legislation, when they arrive in Canada they will suffer again because of the mistreatment and categorization by the Conservative government. That is very bad.

Refugees need to be seen as victims and they need to be helped. We have to stop seeing them as criminals, which they are not. They are victims. Many agencies and groups agree with the NDP that this bill makes no sense. Allow me to name a few: the Canadian Council for Refugees, Amnesty International Canada, the Canadian Civil Liberties Association, the Canadian Bar Association. I find it hard to believe that all those people do not know what they are talking about.

• (1655)

[English]

**Mr. Dennis Bevington (Western Arctic, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, in standing to speak to the bill, once again I come up against a problem that we have in Parliament. I find it difficult to understand the motivation of the government moving forward with legislation. The parroted answers government members give to questions and their very carefully controlled speeches do not provide us with much of their motivation. In many cases we end up trying to find the motivation of the government in this endeavour.

We have good legislation that could be applied to human smugglers. We know how to deal with them. What is it that the government is trying to accomplish with Bill C-4?

I have a list of 80 organizations that deal with immigrants in Canada and they are all opposed to the bill. I have not seen the government come up with a list of organizations that support it in its efforts. Why not?

**Mr. Scott Armstrong:** Every poll supports it.

**Mr. Dennis Bevington:** They say that millions of Canadians are supporting them. Millions of Canadians do not understand the Conservatives' motivation either, and the people who attempt to understand their motivation tend to understand that the bill is not a good idea and it should not be supported. Why is that?

Canada has a great reputation with regard to immigration. We bring in lots of people, but we have a point system that very clearly sets certain standards for people who come into this country. We have decided that we want the best the world has to offer in terms of the people who come to this country.

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Lately we have not received many refugees. Refugees do not come under the point system in the same sense that immigrants do. We have a system which in the past has allowed quite a number of refugees into Canada. Canada has been a haven for refugees from around the world. This is good, but what will happen with this legislation that has been put forward by the Conservatives?

When the world's population understands what this new legislation that governs how refugees are treated in Canada, what will that do for the perception of individuals in a war-torn country who have to make a choice about where they should apply for refugee status? What will that do? It will send a message to those refugees that they had better watch out if they come to Canada, because if they do anything wrong to get here, anything we can interpret as illegal, they will be under severe distress. There will be no recourse. They will be in trouble.

I am the son of a refugee. My mother was brought to Canada by my grandmother from Russia, after the Russian revolution. All the family my grandmother had in Russia was wiped out. She escaped. After her death I found a birth certificate. We think it was forged. She used a forged birth certificate to come to Canada because she had no alternative. She had to get through what was a very difficult time in this world.

If that had happened today and my mother was a child of that refugee who came to Canada with papers that were forged, under illegal circumstances, they would be put into detention.

What did happen under the old system is that they settled in western Canada and became great members of our society, pillars of the community, good people with a grandson in Parliament who is able to speak up for that type of person, who is able to stand here and talk about that kind of person.

• (1700)

What are we doing here? We are going to limit refugees coming to our country by their understanding of our laws passed here in Bill C-4. This is going to change the way refugees view Canada in a serious way. We will turn our backs on many people in the years to come.

We will continue to bring in the immigrants we want, the ones who meet our classification, the ones who are the cream of the crop, the ones we think will do well for our economy and our society, and that is great. That is wonderful.

However, for those who are escaping from war-torn countries and have to do whatever it is they have to do to get into another country are going to be under some duress. If they are poor and if they have to rely on others to assist them in doing this, if they have to get on a boat with 50 other people, they will be putting themselves in distress by Canadian law. That is a pity.

It is shocking that Canada is going to turn in this direction under the Conservative government. Eighty groups say not to do this. Where is the support of learned Canadian society for what the Conservatives are doing here? It does not exist because Canadians by and large are compassionate and understanding. The learned ones are that way, too. We have a situation where the learned are not on side. The Conservatives say that Canadians are on side but there is no evidence of this at all, none at all; it is simply made up.

Operating by emotion alone, the Conservatives are making decisions about the future of this country and how we deal with issues. That is the wrong way to govern. We have seen this two or three times already since Parliament reassembled with the new majority. We do not have the ability that we did in the last Parliament to stop some of this stuff. We will have to rely on public opinion to change it.

**An hon. member:** Public opinion is on side with exactly what we are doing.

**An hon. member:** The poll was on May 2.

**Mr. Dennis Bevington:** Mr. Speaker, the Conservatives say that we are going to lose this one. No, we will not. The Conservatives will lose one four years from now because of the things they are doing. The things they are doing now will come home to roost in four years. It will all add up and Canadians will understand what is going on here with this type of government action.

I do not have much more to say about this bill. My colleagues have laid out the conditions of this bill in good fashion. The Conservatives should think hard about what they are doing to the nature of this country, the country in which my grandmother and mother found refuge. Unfortunately, that refuge will not be as available for others.

**Mr. Harold Albrecht (Kitchener—Conestoga, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, in this speech from the NDP opposition again we heard the innuendo that somehow Canada is losing its place of respect on the international stage in how it deals with refugees.

The member asked what message we are sending and what is going to happen now. I remind the member and indeed all Canadians that the Balanced Refugee Reform Act, which a previous colleague of his implied has not come into law, came into law in June. It received royal assent on June 29 at 5 p.m. That act actually increases the number of refugees Canada receives each year by 2,500.

This is the kind of message the international scene is receiving. This government is standing up for refugees. We want refugees to be welcomed into this country, but we want to be sure that the refugees, the asylum seekers we are accepting are actually refugees.

What is so wrong with having public safety officials determine that the people who are seeking refugee here are in fact legitimate refugees?

• (1705)

**Mr. Dennis Bevington:** Mr. Speaker, in response to that I would like to quote from the UN Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees:

The Contracting States shall not impose penalties, on account of their illegal entry or presence, on refugees who, coming directly from a territory where their life or freedom is threatened in the sense of article 1, enter or are present in their territory without authorization, provided they present themselves without delay to the authorities and show good cause for their illegal entry or presence.

There is what an international body, the United Nations, has said should be the case for refugees. This bill is contrary to that sentiment and that law. By that nature, it will cause refugees to take a hard look at Canada when they are looking at where they can go for refuge.



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**Mr. Ted Hsu (Kingston and the Islands, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, in my short time in this chamber, I have heard many times the Conservative government, in response to a question about an important issue, make the statement that it has done a little thing, which turns out to be a little band-aid and it usually starts out with, “We thank the Auditor General for her report”, and then continues.

It seems to me that this is another example of that where we take a small part of the overall refugee system, which is under some strain, and then the government proposes to deal with it in a kind of a sledgehammer way, not really thinking about the lack of resources that seems to be the real source of the problem.

I wonder if the member would care to comment about the fact that the number of people arriving in boats where there is a nice opportunity for a photo opportunity is actually a small percentage of the overall number of refugees coming into this country.

**Mr. Dennis Bevington:** Mr. Speaker, I am sorry but I cannot give my colleague a precise answer.

However, I do feel that, yes, this problem is a minor problem. We have the laws in place to deal with human smuggling, so that is not the issue.

As I said before, my desire is to understand the government's motivation in putting forward this kind of draconian legislation to deal with a problem that is not of significance to a country as grand and powerful as Canada. It just does not make sense to me and I cannot make sense of it.

**Ms. Jean Crowder (Nanaimo—Cowichan, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I will begin by acknowledging the work of the member for Trinity—Spadina. In fact, when I speak to Bill C-4, An Act to amend the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act, the Balanced Refugee Reform Act and the Marine Transportation Security Act, I will quote from the speech that the member for Trinity—Spadina gave in response to this legislation.

In her summary she said:

...this bill is not designed to prevent human smuggling because we already have laws that do that. It is designed to distract the public and put the blame for the long wait list that immigrants now have to endure in order to bring their loved ones to Canada on people who are desperately trying to leave a dangerous situation.

I think that sums up very adequately the NDP opposition to the bill. We know that many potential immigrants are currently facing very long delays in having their applications considered.

I will turn to the legislative summary of Bill C-4. I will not read every aspect of the act but there are a couple of pieces I want to touch on. Under the background piece, it states:

Specifically, the bill:

creates the new category of “designated foreign national” for any member of a group which the Minister has designated as an “irregular arrival” to Canada, with the resultant creation of a mandatory detention regime; mandatory conditions on release from detention; restrictions on the issuance of refugee travel documents; and restrictions on certain immigration applications, applicable only to “designated foreign national”;

does not allow “designated foreign nationals” any right to appeal to the Refugee Appeal Division...;

amends the MTSA to increase the penalties for individuals and corporations who contravene existing laws, and creates new penalties to be imposed specifically on vessels involved in contraventions of the MTSA.

For people who are listening, the MTSA is the Marine Transportation Security Act.

I want to touch briefly on the Marine Transportation Security Act and members will see why in a minute. There are increased penalties for contravening ministerial direction. Section 16 of the MTSA provides the Minister of Transport with the discretion to direct any vessel not to enter Canada, to leave Canada or to travel to another area in Canadian waters in accordance with any instructions the minister may give regarding the route or manner of proceeding. Ministerial directions to vessels may be made where there are reasonable grounds to believe the vessel is a threat to the security of any person or thing, including any goods, vessel or marine facility.

Clause 27 of Bill C-4 would amend section 17 of the MTSA which sets out the penalties imposed on operators of vessels that contravene ministerial directions and significantly increases the maximum fines for individuals or corporations and the maximum period of incarceration for individuals. In addition, clause 27 would create a new distinction between a first contravention and subsequent contraventions imposing higher penalties for second or subsequent contraventions of ministerial discretion.

I have a reason for mentioning that particular clause of Bill C-4. On Friday, September 30, a headline in the *Nanaimo Daily News* read, “Derelict Ship Will Stay in Nanaimo for Six Months”. It goes on to state:

The MV *Sun Sea*, a derelict ship used to transport ethnic Tamil migrants to Canada, will remain tied up at the Nanaimo Shipyard for at least another six-month term.

...that has been tied up at the shipyard for almost a year, stay in Nanaimo until at least March 2012.

The rusting 193-foot ship was intercepted by federal authorities on Aug. 13, 2010, off B.C.'s coast after three months at sea.

There are a couple of pieces to this.

First, there are smugglers and, as the member for Trinity—Spadina pointed out, there is already adequate legislation in place to deal with the smugglers. Therefore, why are we using Bill C-4 to punish the refugees? These smugglers put refugees at high risk in dangerous transport. We really need a refugee system that is more able to deal with people who are in fairly desperate situations and want to come to our country.

The other piece, as we see with the MV *Sun Sea*, is that once these vessels arrive in Canada and become derelict, it remains to the community to attempt to deal with them. Although the Nanaimo Shipyard is monitoring the vessel daily to ensure there is no environmental danger to local waters, we now have a derelict vessel sitting in a Nanaimo Shipyard. In fact, the taxpayers are actually footing the bill for this. What we really need is meaningful legislation to deal with derelict vessels, which is a little aside to this. Once again, I call up on the government to support Bill C-231.

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● (1710)

When it comes to people arriving by sea, other countries have tried similar laws. I have a note here that states that similar laws in Australia have met with opposition from Amnesty International, which has started a campaign to tackle the same misinformation surrounding refugees who arrive by boat. The rethink refugees campaign highlights the fact that it is legal under international law to arrive by boat and that the vast majority of those who do are in fact legitimate claimants.

We have heard the New Democrats speak in the House about the Canadian experience with the Vietnamese refugees, the boat people. We know that the Vietnamese people were accepted as refugees and became a very important part of many of our communities.

In the time I have left I will talk about a couple of other problems with the bill. In analyzing Bill C-4, one of the problems is designated claimants. The minister would be able to designate a group of refugees as an irregular arrival if he or she believes that an examination cannot be conducted in a timely manner, or if it is suspected that people are being smuggled for profit or a criminal organization or terrorist groups are involved in the smuggling. Designated claimants would then be subject to all kinds of special rules. One of the concerns with that particular aspect of the bill is that it would create two classes of refugee claimants.

With regard to detention, designated claimants, including children, would be mandatorily detained on arrival or on designation. There would be no review by the Immigration and Refugee Board on their detention for a year. Release would only be possible if they are found to be a refugee, if the IRB orders their release or he minister decides that there are exceptional circumstances. However, I have a note indicating that the IRB cannot release a person if the government says that the person's identity has not been established. Even then, the IRB cannot intervene.

The concerns are that there are clear violations of the charter. The Supreme Court has already struck down mandatory detention without review on security certificates. It would imply indefinite detention on the basis of identity with no possibility of release until the minister decides that the identity is established. Arbitrary detention is also a violation of a number of international treaties.

There are a number of other clauses but I want to touch on the appeal aspect. Decisions on claims by designated persons could not be appealed to the Refugee Appeal Division. This is a discriminatory practice and risks violating provisions in the refugee convention, similar to the government's attempt to exclude nationals from designated countries from the appeal in previous legislation.

The next concern is the humanitarian compassion applications. Designated persons could not make humanitarian compassion applications or apply for temporary resident permits for five years. The concern with this particular aspect is that this would be an undue barrier for humanitarian and compassionate claims. It may be a violation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child since there would be no opportunity to consider the best interests of the child.

Another concern is the retroactive designations. The minister has been able to make retroactive designations for arrivals in Canada since March 31, 2009. For example, people on the *Sun Sea*, which I

mentioned, could be designated. It makes no sense that someone can go back retroactively and impose that kind of penalty on people.

The New Democrats are not alone in raising concerns around this legislation. A news article in *Embassy* highlights a group of lawyers and others who have come together to highlight the problems with this legislation. This article in *Embassy* states:

The group wants to act "as a strong counter balance" to "current policy trends seeking to limit refugee rights in Canada,"... "More than ever, lawyers and academics across Canada must coordinate their efforts to protect human rights, preserve the Charter, and defend asylum seekers,"....

The article goes on to talk about the definitions around human smuggling and the fact that human smuggling has already been covered in other parts of the legislation.

I urge members of the House to vote against this bill and take a serious look at the real problems with our immigration system.

● (1715)

**Hon. Jason Kenney (Minister of Citizenship, Immigration and Multiculturalism, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for her comments, although I would like to point out that most, if not all, of what she said is inaccurate..

I will point out a couple of examples. She spoke about the Vietnamese boat people as somehow being analogous to smuggled illegal migrants coming to Canada. That is an insult to the Vietnamese boat people, who fled Communist persecution in Vietnam, went to regional processing centres established by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees in Southeast Asia, submitted their claims for assessment, were determined to be convention refugees by the UNHCR and were then referred for resettlement by the UNHCR to countries like Canada, which invited them to come here in an orderly fashion.

That is how the international refugee protection system is supposed to work. It does not work by paying smugglers up to \$50,000 to bypass the system, in this case often going from Tamil Nadu in India to Thailand or Malaysia and then to Canada, bypassing 24 other countries and multiple regional protection opportunities—and by the way, where is the persecution in Thailand?

She also mentions the charter. All it requires is that an oral hearing on credibility be granted before a decision-maker by the asylum claimant, which in the bill is a right that would be afforded to all, even to smuggled migrants.

Finally, it does nothing to violate the refugee convention because it fully respects our obligations of non-refoulement under the convention. We would not return anyone who has been deemed by our legal system to face danger or persecution.



• (1720)

**Ms. Jean Crowder:** Mr. Speaker, the reason I raised the issue around the Vietnamese refugees who arrived by boat was in the context of the campaign Amnesty International has started in Australia, where it has a Rethink Refugees campaign that is taking the approach that it is legal by international law to arrive by boat. I understand that the circumstances are different from the MV *Sun Sea*, but we have had a history in the past of people arriving by boat and becoming productive, contributing, important members of our communities.

The plea here is to take a look at the desperate situation that many refugees are in when they try to come to Canada. We truly are a land of opportunity, and it is a chance for us to provide that opportunity for refugees.

**Mr. Ted Hsu (Kingston and the Islands, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, seeing the Minister of Citizenship, Immigration and Multiculturalism across the floor, I would like to ask the hon. member if she would care to comment about the minister's argument that the purpose of the bill is to influence the economic decisions of people who undertake this very dangerous journey across the ocean and to influence the price point.

I am wondering if she thinks any of the people coming across the ocean on very dangerous voyages are really thinking about price points.

**Ms. Jean Crowder:** Mr. Speaker, I am not sure I can actually say that it will influence the price point for people who are making that kind of decision. Often people are in desperate situations, and I am not sure they will actually sit down and read Bill C-4 before they make the decision to hand across money. Many of them are fleeing for their lives, as my colleague rightly points out.

I know this is a different circumstance, but we have had people apply for refugee status from Colombia, for example, and given the desperation they are facing in terms of what is happening to some of their family members who are still in Colombia, those potential refugee claimants are not going to read Bill C-4 before they make the decision to flee their country. That argument is just not going to wash.

**Mr. Pat Martin (Winnipeg Centre, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I am glad to have the opportunity to enter into the debate on Bill C-4, Preventing Human Smugglers from Abusing Canada's Immigration System Act.

Let me begin by saying that immigration and refugee issues are top of mind for the people and the community I represent in the inner city of Winnipeg. We are happy to welcome many newcomers. Some came here voluntarily to better themselves, while some were forced to come here to flee persecution in other countries.

My area is a low-income part of Winnipeg and has the most affordable housing, so most new arrivals to the province of Manitoba actually land in my jurisdiction of Winnipeg Centre. It is both a pleasure and a challenge in that, as is the case with many members here, our MP offices become de facto immigration offices. New arrivals do not seem to be able to find the settlement services they need to integrate seamlessly through the immigration system. More often than not, it seems, they wind up in our offices in some level of

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crisis. Many need our services, and we are happy to be able to provide them when we can.

By way of prefacing my remarks, I should also recognize and pay tribute to the International Centre in Winnipeg, which offers settlement services to new arrivals, both immigrants and refugees.

On my own staff, Vân Nguyen is a woman of Vietnamese descent who was herself a refugee who arrived in Canada as one of the waves of what we called "boat people" at the time. Vân Nguyen worked for Immigration Canada for many years. I am proud to say she is now on my staff and provides necessary services to a great many new arrivals.

Speaking of boat people, I think this debate has become too narrow. As I have watched the debate develop and evolve in the House over the last number of days, we seem to be focusing on boat people as if there is some fear that we are going to be overrun by people landing on our shores in rusty boats and setting foot on our soil and therefore, by the same decision, cluttering up our immigration and refugee system with massive numbers of arrivals coming in this fashion.

That is not really true. I think the minister would be able to verify that a lot more arrivals land at Toronto Pearson International Airport and claim refugee status than arrive by washing up on our shores in boats.

I remember when I was the immigration critic for the NDP in a previous Parliament. It was around the time Chinese boat people were arriving on the west coast of British Columbia after being smuggled by snakeheads. It was a problem, granted, as there were hundreds of people at a time, and it cluttered and clogged our system.

The minister at the time, Elinor Caplan, actually took an all-party delegation of us to China, to the very place that these particular groups of economic migrants came from. They were not refugees seeking a better life in Canada, which we cannot fault them for, but by no means did they really meet the definition of refugees.

However, we went on a fact-finding mission to the very ports where these people were coming from. We even met some people who planned on joining the next wave that was on its way to Canada. We did not meet them in a rice paddy or some kind of peasant's hut; we met them in the revolving discotheque on the top of a high-rise in the village of Fuzhou, which turned out to be a city of five million people.

There are many types of people who seek to arrive here by non-conventional means. It is very hard to adjudicate and triage these people to determine who are legitimate refugees and who are economic migrants who were smuggled here by paying \$50,000 to some snakehead, so I am sympathetic to the problem.

What I am critical of is the politics of fear that I believe are being employed as a *modus operandi* and as a theme, not just to deal with this particular issue but as a motif. It is almost a pattern or a hallmark of this government.

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• (1725)

Bill C-10 is probably a good example, or analogous at least, in that in spite of overwhelming evidence that crime is actually being reduced in almost every category and is at its lowest level since 1973, the government of the day would have us believe that we are in such danger of being murdered in the night by some junkie that we have to vote for the Conservatives to protect us from the straw man that they have built up and that they are the only ones who can knock this straw man down.

That seems to be the tone of the debate that is developing here as we deal with refugees: that we are under such danger of being overwhelmed by these hordes of people trying to break through our system and jump the queue and by phony refugees claiming to be legitimate refugees that there is some emergency here and that draconian, drastic action is necessary.

Elinor Caplan took us to China to find out the root of the problem there. I use this as an example of a mature way of investigating and dealing with a problem, and that is what it was: it was not an emergency then, it was a problem, and it is not an emergency now. It is a problem that might be straining our immigration system.

On the same trip, we stopped in Sydney, Australia, and met with the minister of immigration of Australia, who had a much different way of dealing with it. The Australians had no 1985 Singh decision to guide them or inform their policies. They would just simply lock people up.

Everybody who arrived on their shores without any documentation would be held in a pen, essentially, until such time as they could determine what to do with them. More often than not, they put them on the first boat back where they came from, without a whole lot of consideration, I might add, as to what might befall those people at the other end.

That was under Johnny Howard in Australia. Immigration was a tough-love policy, and refugees were not treated with anywhere near the sensitivity we have toward our obligations under UN conventions regarding refugees.

I know the Singh decision has posed challenges for Canada. This notion, and the Supreme Court ruling, is that once people set foot on Canadian soil, they are essentially entitled to the due process of the immigration system in its entirety. They are not detained unless there is some justification to do so and are free to move freely through Canadian society until such time as their status can be determined.

I put it to the minister that there is a much bigger problem with undocumented refugees arriving at Pearson airport. They obviously had papers when they got on a plane. How is it that they do not have any papers when they get off the plane? People are not allowed to get on an airplane without documents. Did they tear them up in the washroom and flush them down the toilet, over the ocean on their way here? Because when they land, they do not seem to have any papers. They are undocumented. Then they are in the system, and then we know this takes years.

That is a problem. That is a legitimate problem.

However, that is not an emergency or a crisis either. It would be disingenuous to try to convince the Canadian people that there is

some immigration crisis going on here where, as I say, massive waves of refugees are trying to break through and cut their way through the line.

We only have about, and the minister can correct me, 11,000 or so refugees a year. Or was it 25,000? I cannot remember. I would be happy to have this clarified.

Not enough of them come from refugee camps is what I am getting at. A majority of the refugees who come to Canada do not come to us through conventional channels of waiting in a UN-sponsored refugee camp until their turn comes up and then coming here as per the process. Most refugees do arrive in some unconventional means; they find their own way here. They flee the situation they are in and they arrive in Canada, and we have to deal with them.

However, it is disingenuous and it is, again, that politics of fear that would have us believe we are in some crisis situation that calls for and justifies legislation that has been called draconian.

• (1730)

**Hon. Jason Kenney (Minister of Citizenship, Immigration and Multiculturalism, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I always know when I am winning a debate and that is when my opponents completely mischaracterize my arguments as the member for Winnipeg Centre has just done.

Neither I nor any spokesman of the government have ever said that Canada is being flooded by massive waves of ships and unfounded refugee claimants. That is a complete mischaracterization of what we have said.

What we have said is that it is critical that we maintain the fairness and integrity of our immigration system and that large-scale human smuggling does represent a threat to the integrity and fairness of our system. It is a commercial transaction where people pay criminal gangs, that is what the smuggling syndicates are, large sums of money, committing in this case up to \$50,000, to come to Canada ahead of the normal immigration queue.

Friends in the opposition say that there is no immigration queue. That is not true. The member just pointed out the fact that millions of people are waiting patiently for resettlement opportunities, who are designated convention refugees that at UNHCR camps around the world, some 12,000 of whom we accept.

The member has said that we are getting 11,000 refugee claimants per year. That is not so. Last year we got about 29,000 asylum claimants. Two years ago it was 38,000 asylum claimants. We are always in the top three industrialized countries in terms of the number of asylum claims filed, about 62% of which are determined to be unfounded.

I am just bringing some facts to the debate.

Does the member not agree that we should take reasonable measures that respect the charter and respect the UN convention on refugees that disincentivize people from paying smugglers to come here in this dangerous and illegal way?



**Mr. Pat Martin:** Mr. Speaker, I thank the minister for clarifying the numbers of refugees. I think the minister is aware, as members should be, that sometimes as many as 500 people in a single day get off airplanes at Pearson Airport and claim refugee status. If there is a problem anywhere, it is the undocumented refugees who arrive by air, one at a time. It is not those group sailings that seem to be the focus of the minister's efforts to date. He said that it is a potential problem, but it is not a daily issue that a boatful of people is smuggled into Canada.

The government is overreacting with this legislation because in fact legislation already exists. There can be a sentence of life imprisonment for human smuggling already. The government is introducing mandatory minimum sentences again. It is introducing measures that experts in the field find abhorrent and unnecessary. It is going over the top.

• (1735)

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the member for Winnipeg Centre has a way to express how he really feels on issues.

I feel fairly passionate, as I am sure he does, as many members do about Bill C-4 and how we have the refugees being the victims. We are talking about victims twice over.

In fact, the on the ship on which the minister and the Prime Minister were standing, I believe there were 75, 76 individuals who were seeking asylum. I believe they have all been granted that asylum. That image—

**Hon. Jason Kenney:** No, none have.

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux:** The minister says that none have. We will have to wait and see.

Does the member believe that the proposed desired impact of the minister is to get at the profiteers? Does he believe that this legislation will do what the minister wants it to do, and that is to get at the profiteers, or will it cause our refugees to be victims twice?

**Mr. Pat Martin:** Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague from Winnipeg North who I know deals with at least as many immigration cases on a daily basis as my overworked office does.

First, I do not understand the government's priorities, that in the first session of the 41st Parliament one of the most top-of-mind paramount issues is cracking down on a problem that by the minister's own admission is only an occasional issue.

There are far more immigration problems associated with, for instance, crooked immigration consultants domestically, charging \$3,000 to get a form that is available free of charge at the post office or charging \$500 to some poor person, saying that they can get them into the MP and get a letter. That kind of crooked behaviour is rampant through the immigration consultants in our country.

Honestly, our energies would be better used addressing some of those domestic problems.

[Translation]

**Mr. Raymond Côté (Beauport—Limoilou, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, it is important for me to speak today about the bill to prevent human smugglers from abusing Canada's immigration system.

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Bill C-4 is not only an unacceptable affront to the human dignity of thousands of men, women and children, but it is also a threat to the Canadian values that we hold in trust, a heritage reaching back thousands of years that we cannot betray without serious consequences. Let me explain.

Section 7 of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms is the embodiment of this heritage. It reads:

Everyone has the right to life, liberty and security of the person and the right not to be deprived thereof except in accordance with the principles of fundamental justice.

In 1985, in *Singh v. Minister of Employment and Immigration*, the Supreme Court found that section 7 extends to every human being who is physically present in Canada. It protects all men, women and children against the arbitrary power of the state or a minister.

As a result, the long-term detention without charge or trial that would be imposed under Bill C-4 is a denial of this fundamental Canadian value embodied by section 7 of the charter.

Why does section 7 of the charter exist? As I said earlier, we are the custodians of a heritage reaching back thousands of years. Our institutions, inspired by Britain's, are the result of a long and difficult process. Many direct threats could have destroyed our institutions and put us all under an arbitrary regime, which is the opposite of Canada's current situation. The prohibition of arbitrary detention without trial is a part of this heritage, which is a basis for our common values. The principle of habeas corpus was established by English barons in the Magna Carta, which was forced on King John in 1215. The protection that it offered to some British subjects at that time has since been extended to all human beings both in international treaties and in the fundamental national laws of many countries.

We must not forget that since those ancient days, women, children, persons of colour, people of all backgrounds and faiths, and the aboriginal peoples of this country have been protected by this principle of justice adopted long ago as a Canadian value. So why is the minister proposing that we go back in time? How can he justify superseding the courts and acting as both judge and jury in deciding the fate of men, women and children, and thus violating both the letter and the spirit of the charter?

Have we forgotten so quickly the lessons learned from the detention camps where Canadian citizens of Japanese origin languished during World War II? Are we to conclude that it was wrong to generously welcome the Vietnamese boat people a few decades ago? We must remember that the principles in the Magna Carta were established at a time when fear was more pervasive than it is today. Despite the fear evoked by the sovereign's sword, the English barons had the courage to demand and obtain, for themselves as well as for a large number of His Majesty's subjects, principles of justice so fundamental that we cannot deny them without denying all that we are.

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The dark days that followed the invocation of the War Measures Act in the October crisis of 1970 remind us of the fragility of these fundamental principles when we are governed by fear. Hundreds of people were arbitrarily detained by the authorities at that time. Yet it has never been proven that the use of these exceptional measures gave the police a definite advantage in countering the criminal actions of the FLQ.

• (1740)

On the contrary, it now seems as though the ordinary Criminal Code provisions that were in place at that time would have been enough to take action against that group. At that time, Tommy Douglas rose in the House to vehemently denounce the government's intention of using these extraordinary measures in our country. And history has proven him right. A young man by the name of Jack Layton found inspiration in this courageous act by our party's first leader, and it gave him the desire to defend these principles and values that are so deeply rooted in Canada.

And our charter also says that "Canada is founded upon principles that recognize the supremacy of God and the rule of law". The Judeo-Christian principles that form the foundation of our country are the key to understanding our heritage and the resulting consequences on our collective life.

I would like to refer to the gospels. A woman was brought before Christ by her accusers. She was accused of adultery and was to be stoned. The accusers insisted on questioning Christ about the legitimacy of stoning her to death. He said, "If any one of you is without sin, let him be the first to throw a stone at her." Obviously, no one dared. And when the accusers dispersed, Christ asked the woman, "Woman, where are they? Has no one condemned you?" She replied that no one was left, and Christ said to her, "Then neither do I condemn you. Go now and leave your life of sin."

This teaching does not preclude the existence of a justice system and the enforcement of a legal code, but it reminds us that we need to be extremely careful about judging the actions of others.

Our justice system is set up with guarantees to protect our rights as individuals. As I said earlier, every man, woman and child who is on Canadian soil is entitled to the basic protection provided under the spirit of habeas corpus. How can the minister come before this House and challenge such a fundamental Canadian value?

Are we but minions so crushed by fear that we will, like cowards, betray the legacy left to us by the great political giants of Canadian history, the founding fathers of our country, the first venerable pioneers of this legacy, the courageous English barons of the 13th century?

Fear is a bad adviser and all too often it makes us lose sight of reality. The arrival of the *MV Sun Sea* with 492 Tamils on board, including 60 women and 55 children, was a convenient pretext for this government to introduce its initial bill. Bill C-4 is merely another attempt to exploit people's fear of massive arrivals of refugees by sea. This public relations stunt is not based on any real problem. One recent case even proves that the existing legislation is sufficient. The only thing missing is the means to enforce it.

The case of the *MV Ocean Lady* is an excellent example. The 76 Tamil refugees were detained for an investigation in October 2009.

In January 2010, they were all released after the government admitted that there was no evidence that they belonged to a terrorist organization or had any criminal ties. Only four Sri Lankans have been arrested in 2011 for trying to enter Canada illegally. Would detaining them unnecessarily any longer have changed any of the conclusions? Nothing could be less certain.

Will we allow this government attempt to jeopardize our fundamental rights like this? Once these Canadian values are undermined, what will the government target next?

• (1745)

**Hon. Jason Kenney (Minister of Citizenship, Immigration and Multiculturalism, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the hon. member for his comments.

He spoke at length about the detention of illegal immigrants under the bill. He suggested that it was a violation of rights to have immigration-related detentions. Having the option to detain illegal immigrants has always been an aspect of Canada's immigration law. I must say that the proposed measures in Bill C-4 are far more modest than the current practices, the real practices, applied in the vast majority of the western democracies.

I note for example the United Kingdom, France and other western European countries. The European Union requires almost all asylum seekers to be detained until the determination of their status. The same goes for Australia and the United States. All these countries are acting in accordance with international conventions on human rights that recognize that it is a right, a responsibility of the state, to regulate immigration in a legal and normal fashion.

In closing, I must point out that under the new asylum system, which will come into force next June, asylum seekers will be granted refugee status within three months, the same length of time as those who arrived as part of a human smuggling operation will be released from detention. It is not necessarily a one-year time frame for true refugees. They would be released from detention within three months.

**Mr. Raymond Côté:** Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. minister for his comments and his long speech.

I have an observation to make, both as a historian and as a Canadian citizen. I remind this House that since the beginning of the 20th century, and particularly since the second world war, Canada has been a leader in defending and advancing human rights, both in Canada and abroad. So I do not think it is a viable argument to compare our situation to that of other countries. I would ask the minister to explain to us how implementing these measures, according to the objectives of this bill, will allow for the arrest of a single person. I really do not see how that could happen.

• (1750)

[English]

**Mr. Ted Hsu (Kingston and the Islands, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I am reminded that the rights we enjoy are affirmed when they are applied to the lowest in our society. I am also reminded of something that I personally believe, along with many others of different faiths, which is that we should have a preference for the poor. It is an opinion that many Canadians share.



When I talk to people about this legislation, there is a lot of fear about refugees coming to our country. I respectfully disagree with my colleagues on the other side of the House that this bill focuses on what a small, very visible stream of refugees coming to this country does with respect to what the members opposite would claim. It preys on the fear that people have that Canada is being overwhelmed by refugees. I would ask the member to comment on that.

[Translation]

**Mr. Raymond Côté:** Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his comments.

I will take this opportunity to remind the House that one of the principles of our justice system is to protect an innocent person from an unfair conviction, even if the result is that an accused is unfortunately not convicted or is declared innocent. Which is better? Is it better that the rights of 100 innocent people are protected at the cost of a single guilty person going free?

**Ms. Laurin Liu (Rivière-des-Mille-Îles, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to speak today about Bill C-4 on human trafficking.

I would first like to remind the hon. members that this bill is similar to Bill C-49, which was hastily introduced by the Conservative government in the last Parliament. Bill C-49 was the government's response to the arrival on the coast of British Columbia of two ships carrying Tamil migrants.

At the time, all the opposition parties opposed Bill C-49 because of the large amount of power it would bestow upon the minister and because it appeared to violate Canadian and international law. We still have these same concerns with Bill C-4.

Given the Conservatives' mistrust of newcomers and their tendency toward repression, I am not certain that more discretion should be given to the government, particularly to this Conservative government. The main problem with the bill is that it is arbitrary and discriminatory. It is discriminatory because it creates two categories of refugees depending on the method of transportation these individuals used to enter the country. The bill limits the rights of legitimate refugees who arrive in Canada in a group that was smuggled across the border.

The bill grants the minister the power to arbitrarily designate a group's arrival in Canada as irregular if the minister is of the opinion that examinations relating to the identity of the refugees cannot be conducted in a timely manner or if he suspects that the arrival involves organized human smuggling activity for profit, or in support of a criminal organization or terrorist group.

Designated claimants would then be subject to a host of special rules that do not apply to other newcomers. For example, the bill stipulates that designated claimants, including children, will be automatically detained upon their arrival or at the moment they are so designated. In a state with ordinary rules, individuals are judged on case-by-case basis according to their individual circumstances. It is appalling that an administrative decision with such serious consequences could be made on the basis of an individual's belonging to a certain group. Nevertheless, that is what the Conservatives' Bill C-4 is proposing.

Once again, the Conservatives are using the refugee issue for political purposes, as they are also doing with the whole crime issue.

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Their way of doing things is well known. They use any random news item as a pretext for amending legislation and showing off their might. Ultimately, the problems remain unresolved and the government would be better off using the existing legislation. It would certainly be less spectacular, but it would be much more effective.

In the case of smuggling, for example, there already are laws against human trafficking. Why not enforce them? A few months ago, Parliament passed new strong, balanced legislation regarding refugees. What we need now is better enforcement of that law. Instead of playing political games, the government should also provide the RCMP with the resources it needs to do its work effectively. The Conservatives are saying that this bill will cut down on human trafficking. But in reality this bill, as it stands, concentrates too much power in the hands of the Minister of Immigration and unfairly penalizes refugees.

By contrast, the NDP wants to directly penalize the criminals: the traffickers and the smugglers. As currently drafted, Bill C-4 punishes legitimate refugees and the people who try to help them. The proposed process is neither clear nor transparent and, in addition to being arbitrary, it is ultimately quite discriminatory. We feel that Bill C-4 may break Canadian laws and contravene Canada's international commitments. Bill C-4 may violate section 15 of the charter, which guarantees equality before the law.

For the benefit of the Conservative members, I would like to read part of section 15 of the charter:

Every individual is equal before and under the law and has the right to the equal protection and equal benefit of the law...

How can anyone claim that this will not create two classes of refugees? Depending on the mode of transportation they use to enter the country, certain refugees could be denied permanent residence, a temporary residence permit, and the right to apply for permanent residence based on humanitarian grounds.

• (1755)

The bill appears to create inequality before the law among refugees. Bill C-4 may also violate section 9 of the charter, which says, "Everyone has the right not to be arbitrarily detained or imprisoned." Bill C-4 provides precisely for the arbitrary detention of foreign nationals "designated" by the Minister for 12 months.

Bill C-4 also clearly contravenes article 31 of the United Nations Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees by which Canada has undertaken not to impose penalties on refugees who come from a territory where their life or freedom was threatened. We believe the government is failing in its responsibilities in respect of refugee protection and human rights.

A number of civil rights associations have spoken out against Bill C-49 and Bill C-4. For example, Amnesty International says the bill "falls far short of Canada's human rights and refugee protection obligations and will result in serious violations of the rights of refugees and migrants".

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As well, the Canadian Bar Association has argued that Bill C-49 “violates Charter protections against arbitrary detention and prompt review of detention, as well as Canada’s international obligations respecting the treatment of persons seeking protection”.

The Refugee Lawyers’ Association of Ontario has “expressed its profound regret over the decision of the [Conservative government] to re-introduce Bill C-49”. The association has described the bill as a “human rights travesty”.

The Canadian Civil Liberties Association has spoken out against “the creation of a new class of ‘designated foreign nationals’.” This class is defined extremely broadly so as to potentially apply to most people fleeing persecution, torture or death in their countries of origin. In effect, the bill creates a two-tier system, with numerous restrictions and negative consequences for those who fall into the designated class.

The NDP is mindful of its responsibility to refugees, unlike the Conservatives who have adopted an approach that damages our reputation in the international community and violates our commitments under the Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees and the Convention on the Rights of the Child. The proposed process is arbitrary and extremely discriminatory. It also does not provide the means to put an end to human trafficking.

We believe that the Conservatives should ensure that existing laws against human trafficking are properly enforced, and we are opposed to this bill.

• (1800)

**Hon. Jason Kenney (Minister of Citizenship, Immigration and Multiculturalism, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I congratulate the honourable member on her comments.

She has reiterated the opposition’s argument that detaining illegal immigrants for a certain period of time is a violation of international human rights conventions, which is completely false. It is completely false.

I would point out that almost all other liberal democracies in the world have much more severe detention measures for illegal immigrants than those proposed in Bill C-4. For example, the vast majority of the democracies in the European Union, which are signatories to the UN conventions on refugees and European conventions on human rights, keep asylum seekers in detention until their status is established. The process is often much longer than the 12-month maximum proposed by this bill.

Why is it a violation for Canada to place illegal immigrants in detention in certain limited cases when it is quite all right for all other democracies to use the same tool?

**Ms. Laurin Liu:** Mr. Speaker, earlier my colleague cited the example of Australia. However, we know that similar measures in Australia met with opposition from Amnesty International, which has announced a campaign to condemn the misinformation surrounding refugees who arrive by boat.

Furthermore, we know that the bill blatantly violates the charter, because it would result in indefinite detentions based on identity issues with no possibility of release until the minister determines that identity has been established.

Arbitrary detention is also a violation of a number of international treaties and we believe that it is outrageous for children to also be detained in such an arbitrary manner.

**Mrs. Sadia Groguhé (Saint-Lambert, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, in our discussions, we have talked about this bill which, unfortunately, does nothing to address the issue of smugglers or human trafficking. We have also said—and this is unfortunate—that the ideology behind the bill plays on the fears of our constituents. That is completely unacceptable.

I would like to ask my colleague if she can tell us why this bill is ineffective and useless.

**Ms. Laurin Liu:** Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the hon. member for her question.

It is clear that this bill will not put an end to refugee smuggling. It targets refugees as opposed to the real criminals. We also feel that this bill is discriminatory because it creates two classes of designated claimants. There is the likelihood of violating equality rights as set out in the charter and in the Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees, which prohibits a government from imposing penalties on refugees for illegal presence or entry.

We believe that the Conservative government needs to stop using refugees as a political tool and that it must respect human rights.

• (1805)

[English]

**Mr. David Wilks (Kootenay—Columbia, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the hon. member mentioned in her speech that the RCMP would have more powers with regard to these types of incidents. I would like her to explain and elaborate on that because I do not believe that the RCMP would have more powers. They only act as immigration officers when there is no immigration officer available.

**Ms. Laurin Liu:** Mr. Speaker, we believe that the government should give RCMP officers the tools that they need to enforce the laws that are in place now rather than create new discriminatory regulations that would actually discriminate against legitimate refugees. We believe that the government needs to enforce the laws in place now that protect the rights of refugees facing persecution in their home countries.

[Translation]

**Mr. François Lapointe (Montmagny—L’Islet—Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, the American economy is stagnant. A large proportion of the small business owners I have met in the last month are facing the same problem: they have orders, but only for a month or two, when generally, at this time of year, they have orders for the next five, six, seven or eight months. Where I live, there are lumber yards with very productive sawmills that are not doing any stock rotation. This is very serious. We are on the eve of a possible recession. Local indicators like the analyses by the big banks remind us of this.



But what have we been doing in this House for two weeks? We have been piling up public safety bills. While people are about to be looking at a rising unemployment rate, we are talking to them about public safety. I do not see the logic in this, unless our Conservative friends have decided that having more inmates might make up for natural resources or opening plants. I cannot see what has prompted us to spend two weeks piling up public safety bills when we are in this kind of economic situation. None of my constituents are talking to me about public safety problems today. No one is telling me there have been more break-ins or whatever that would justify our Parliament spending weeks on public safety issues when there is a recession around the corner.

The bad news, as a result of this kind of behaviour, is that terrorism and crime may increase. If no clear action is taken to slow down or stop a potential recession, at a time when people, particularly young people, are unemployed, crime will increase. When developing countries hit an economic downturn and thousands of people earning low wages lose their jobs, more people may get involved with brutal ideologies and become potential terrorists. When the real solution, to avoid all these problems, is to find a way to stimulate the economy in the short term again, instead we are piling up public safety bills. This is absurd.

Something else is absurd. One of the reasons given by our friends in the government is that refugees arriving in groups by boat might cause a rise in terrorism in Canada. Let us think about that for a minute. Terrorist groups are well financed and unfortunately, in their own way, intelligent. Unfortunately, because they set about causing harm and destroying the democratic structures of developed countries or others that are less developed. Unfortunately, these are people who are well financed, organized and intelligent. They are going to spend months or years radicalizing young people, training them, and then they are going to put them in a boat for three months where they have a three in 10 chance of starving to death. They are going to bring them to a developing country as boat people in a container where their entire investment could literally die of starvation during transport. I would like to see a hint of a shadow of a study showing that refugees who arrive in groups by boat are more likely to be terrorists. I am convinced that a study that looked into this would show us the exact opposite. It is absurd and illogical.

Once again we are presented with a public safety bill, even though this is not what my constituents are talking to me about every day. They are talking to me about the declining numbers of jobs and orders to fill. And on top of that, we are still facing the same problem. The Canadian Bar Association, not the NDP, has reminded us that it did not support the earlier version of the bill.

● (1810)

According to representatives from the bar, this bill violates the provisions of the charter against arbitrary detention, it violates the guarantees in the charter for the prompt review of detentions and violates Canada's international obligations regarding the treatment of persons seeking protection.

This is not someone from the NDP saying so; it is the Canadian Bar Association. Once again, as with Bill C-10, it is clear that the government has no regard for the expertise of professionals in the field. Lawyers and judges have said that the current system is

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reliable and that we do not need even more public safety, as though there were cause for concern and as though we had been seeing widespread crime in Canada for years. That is untrue.

For my remaining time, I have a little exercise. Often enough, our colleagues from the party in power ask us whether we have read the bill. I have news for them: I do read the bills. Oh yes, I will sit down with the text of the bill and will ask questions that occur to me, even in the summary.

At the very beginning, it reads:

(a) authorize the Minister, in certain circumstances, to designate as an irregular arrival the arrival in Canada of a group of persons [all of a sudden they are no longer refugees, but a group of persons], the result of which is that some of the foreign nationals [a new label appears here: "foreign nationals". Their status is no longer refugee, but "foreign national" as soon as they set foot here] in the group [specifically] become designated foreign nationals;

Basically, the government is doing away with the idea of refugees. Thirty years ago, when Southeast Asia was having problems, Laotians and others were arriving in Canada and were welcomed openly, particularly by Quebec families. These were people who needed help and now, all of a sudden, they are designated foreign nationals. Who decides whether a group is designated or not? The minister. Could it be any more arbitrary?

I noted some questions. For example, who decides who makes up a group? A little further on, we can see that a group can be more than 10 people but it can also be fewer than 10 people. If a mother who is already a Canadian citizen accompanies her son who is not and who, for humanitarian reasons, decides to stay in Canada after a trip, do they constitute a group?

I also noted this paragraph:

The officer may refuse to consider an application for permanent residence made under subsection (1) if

(a) the designated foreign national fails, without reasonable excuse, to comply...

I read the bill to see what constituted a reasonable excuse. Is there a definition? What constitutes a reasonable excuse? What does not? I looked. I turned the pages—all of the pages. I read the bill and I still did not find a definition for reasonable excuse. We are talking about human life and dignity. We are talking about people who, for the most part, are not primarily economic refugees. They are afraid that they will starve to death if they return to their country, or face an even worse situation in terms of human rights that involves a direct threat to their safety. Yet, we do not know what constitutes a reasonable excuse. An officer or minister can say whether the excuse is reasonable or whether it is not a good excuse and therefore unreasonable.

The Minister may, by order, having regard to the public interest [it is the minister who determines what the public interest is], designate as an irregular arrival the arrival in Canada of a group of persons if he or she...

A little further down it says:

...any investigations concerning persons in the group — cannot be conducted in a timely manner...

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We are talking about an investigation being conducted in a timely manner for people who arrive by boat, starving to death, with only a few items of clothing. We are going to ask them to provide documentation in a timely manner? These people are starving to death and we are going to ask them to provide their documentation in, for example, two days or tell them that they did not provide it in a timely manner?

• (1815)

I would like to know how the government can violate human dignity in this manner.

[English]

**Hon. Lynne Yelich (Minister of State (Western Economic Diversification), CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask the member to comment about the intent of the bill, which is to introduce measures to deter criminal activity of human smuggling. It is about human smuggling, trying to protect Canadians and creating disincentives, so that in the future people do not take risks in getting involved and participating in human smuggling.

What about the fairness of this legislation and deterring criminal activity in human smuggling, which is really what the bill is about? That is what I would like the member to comment on.

[Translation]

**Mr. François Lapointe:** Mr. Speaker, if the government were to introduce a bill that gives the RCMP and other law enforcement agencies greater power to catch people who engage in the trafficking of immigrants, in human trafficking, I would be the first to support it. I can see they are not really interested in my answer. Like Bill C-10, the vast majority of these documents have to do with denying status, with creating a designated foreign national status. If the government really wanted to solve this problem, it would introduce a bill to do so.

**Mr. Jonathan Tremblay (Montmorency—Charlevoix—Haute-Côte-Nord, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, it is very interesting to note that the government members like to compare Canada to the rest of the world when it comes to the economy, as though Canada were the best. However, when they talk about human rights, they tell us that other places are doing this and they do not see why we should not do it here. Why should we in Canada be able to violate the rights of a group of people?

I wonder if the hon. member for Montmagny—L'Islet—Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup could share his thoughts on the fact that the minister would have the right to designate an arrival as irregular and refuse to consider an application for permanent residence.

**Mr. François Lapointe:** Mr. Speaker, I thank my hon. colleague for his question. Like him, I think that when we compare ourselves to others, we must do so in all things, not only when it suits us to make one specific point.

In November 2010, the High Court of Australia found in favour of two Sri Lankan refugees who alleged that the laws preventing them from appealing their cases before Australian courts were unfair. Other countries that have tried to impose extremely strict laws on refugees have been told by their legal systems that they cannot do so.

So, yes, we know that other countries' attempts to do the same thing have failed.

• (1820)

[English]

**Mrs. Susan Truppe (Parliamentary Secretary for Status of Women, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I want to remind members opposite that human smuggling is a criminal enterprise that spans not only Canada but the globe. Human smugglers facilitate for a profit individuals reaching Canada illegally. By charging people large sums of money for their transportation, human smugglers have made a lucrative business out of facilitating illegal migration, often by counselling smuggled persons to claim asylum in the country to which they are smuggled.

In particular, the human smuggling networks in Southeast Asia are large and growing. Human smuggling undermines Canada's security and large-scale arrivals make it difficult to properly investigate whether those who arrive, including the smugglers themselves, pose risks to Canada on the basis of either criminality or national security. They ignore the fact that human smuggling is not just a profitable business but dangerous and puts the lives of those smuggled in jeopardy.

[Translation]

**Mr. François Lapointe:** Mr. Speaker, I am trying to figure out the question. I only heard a very long statement. I am surprised that the hon. member elaborated on the same issue as the first member from the governing party. I will give the same answer.

I would be prepared to discuss and support a bill that contained every possible means to attack someone who has defrauded people and put them in a container. However, I cannot support a bill that unfairly treats people who tried to flee an extremely difficult situation and suffered abuse. I invite the government to do the same thing it should have done with Bill C-10, in other words, something concrete to address this serious problem—

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bruce Stanton):** Order. Unfortunately, the time has expired. Members never have enough time for questions.

Resuming debate. The member for Shefford has the floor, but I will have to interrupt him at 6:30.

**Mr. Réjean Genest (Shefford, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I am a Canadian living in the 21st century, and I am proud to be recognized as a citizen of a host country. Yes, Canada is a host country. I have had the opportunity to travel in my lifetime and this has allowed me to discover three things, among others.

First, my Canadian identity is highly regarded, which is not a surprise. A number of young people came to my riding office this summer to pick up some Canadian flag stickers to put on their backpacks to ensure that they would be treated well wherever they went and as a symbol of pride. Second, in other places I have been able to visit, such as Colombia, people do not have the same opportunities. Families are evicted from their land and violence is ever-present.



The third is existential in nature. While I am addressing you in this chamber, there are mothers and fathers who are hoping to give peace and joy to their families and to be able to feed them. They are hoping to come to Canada and build a better world with us. They are hoping to go to sleep at night knowing that all their children are asleep in their beds and that none of them have stepped on a mine. How many parents here are thinking of that?

Yes, there are other peace-loving people like you and me, Mr. Speaker, who want a good life. That is the hope of every human being. What is our duty? Is it to shut the door, to tell them that it is not our problem? In my riding of Shefford I have the opportunity to represent immigrants from 104 countries. That is right, 104 countries. You have no idea how pleased I am, as an MP, to be able to help them. I did not start this wonderful resettlement work. We have an organization known as SERY, or Solidarité ethnique régionale de la Yamaska. SERY does great work. It helps all manner of immigrants who have been in Canada for less than five years: refugees, independents, asylum seekers, caregivers, work permit holders—

**Some hon. members:** Oh,oh!

• (1825)

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bruce Stanton):** Order, please. There is a lot of noise in the House. Hon. members are arriving for the upcoming vote. I ask them to take their seats.

The hon. member for Shefford.

**Mr. Réjean Genest:** Mr. Speaker, these newcomers make an important contribution in my community. There are professionals, agricultural workers and students. They have high hopes for their future, and that future is bright.

Why is this government trying so hard to change our Canadian identity? Our identity has been established. We are happy to live together and we want to continue building together. Why is this government trying so hard to have us believe that immigration is a threat? Why does this government not know how to appreciate this human wealth?

I am lucky to have an excellent doctor who immigrated to Canada. His expertise has been extraordinarily beneficial to me in these past few weeks.

I invite my colleagues to think back to January 2010, when Haiti was struck by an earthquake. The government had announced that it would facilitate the arrival of Haitians in Canada, including through the family reunification program. While family reunification claims can take up to three years to be processed under normal circumstances, the fast-tracked files could be settled within weeks, or in two or three months at most.

Remember that the Immigration Canada offices in Haiti were inaccessible; the Canadian Embassy building in Port-au-Prince had been evacuated for safety reasons.

“Accepting of any kind of additional applications or actual coordination on the ground in Haiti at the moment is extremely difficult,” said the Prime Minister during a press conference.

### *Business of Supply*

“It is impossible to recover the files that are in Port-au-Prince,” added the Minister of Citizenship, Immigration and Multiculturalism.

“We think it will take a couple weeks before we can start processing immigration applications from Haiti again,” explained the minister. “Some of the paperwork can be filled out and processed here in Canada,” he added.

Two facts should have been taken into account at the time: the entire world was tuned into this sad event and the government was in a minority position. Is this government acting out of partisanship or for the sake of democracy?

In closing, how do university professors define Canadian identity? In two words: multiculturalism and bilingualism. This is our identity and we want to preserve it.

I am asking this government to stop insisting on changing our perception of ourselves. We live and want to continue living in trust, not in mistrust.

\* \* \*

### **BUSINESS OF SUPPLY**

#### **OPPOSITION MOTION—CANADIAN ECONOMY**

The House resumed from September 29 consideration of the motion.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bruce Stanton):** Order, please. It being 6:30 p.m., pursuant to order made Thursday, September 29, 2011, the House will now proceed to the taking of the deferred recorded division on the motion of the hon. member for Parkdale—High Park.

Call in the members.

• (1855)

(The House divided on the motion, which was agreed to on the following division:)

(Division No. 35)

### **YEAS**

#### **Members**

Ablonczy  
Aglukkaq  
Albrecht  
Allen (Welland)  
Allison  
Ambrose  
Anderson  
Angus  
Ashfield  
Atamanenko  
Ayala  
Bateman  
Bellavance  
Benoit  
Bernier  
Bezan  
Blanchette-Lamothe  
Block  
Borg  
Boulerice  
Brahmi  
Breitkreuz  
Brown (Newmarket—Aurora)  
Bruinooge  
Byrne

Adams  
Albas  
Alexander  
Allen (Tobique—Mactaquac)  
Ambler  
Anders  
Andrews  
Armstrong  
Aspin  
Aubin  
Baird  
Belanger  
Bennett  
Benskin  
Bevington  
Blanchette  
Blancy  
Boivin  
Boughen  
Boutin-Sweet  
Braid  
Brosseau  
Brown (Barrie)  
Butt  
Calandra

*Government Orders*

Calkins	Cannan	Sgro	Shea
Carmichael	Caron	Shipley	Shory
Carrie	Charlton	Sims (Newton—North Delta)	Sitsabaiesan
Chicoine	Chisholm	Smith	Sopuck
Chisu	Chong	Sorenson	St-Denis
Choquette	Christopherson	Stanton	Stewart
Clarke	Cleary	Stoffer	Storseth
Clement	Coderre	Strahl	Sullivan
Comartin	Côté	Sweet	Thibeault
Cotler	Crowder	Tilson	Toet
Cullen	Cuzner	Toews	Toone
Daniel	Davidson	Tremblay	Trost
Davies (Vancouver Kingsway)	Davies (Vancouver East)	Trottier	Trudeau
Day	Dechert	Truppe	Turnel
Del Mastro	Devolin	Tweed	Uppal
Dionne Labelle	Donnelly	Valcourt	Valeriote
Doré Lefebvre	Dreesen	Van Loan	Vellacott
Dubé	Duncan (Vancouver Island North)	Wallace	Warawa
Duncan (Etobicoke North)	Duncan (Edmonton—Strathcona)	Warkentin	Watson
Dusseault	Dykstra	Weston (West Vancouver—Sunshine Coast—Sea to Sky Country)	
Eyking	Findlay (Delta—Richmond East)	Weston (Saint John)	Williamson
Finley (Haldimand—Norfolk)	Fletcher	Wilks	Woodworth
Foote	Fortin	Wong	Young (Oakville)
Freeman	Fry	Yelich	Zimmer— 266
Galipeau	Gallant	Young (Vancouver South)	
Garrison	Genest		
Genest-Jourdain	Gill		
Godin	Golding		
Goodale	Goodyear		
Gosal	Gourde		
Gravelle	Grewal		
Groguhé	Harper		
Harris (Scarborough Southwest)	Harris (Cariboo—Prince George)		
Hassainia	Hawn		
Hayes	Hiebert		
Hilleyer	Hoepfner		
Holder	Hsu		
Jacob	James		
Julian	Kamp (Pitt Meadows—Maple Ridge—Mission)		
Karygiannis	Keddy (South Shore—St. Margaret's)		
Kellway	Kenney (Calgary Southeast)		
Kent	Kerr		
Komarnicki	Kramp (Prince Edward—Hastings)		
Lake	Lamoureux		
Lapointe	Larose		
Latendresse	Lauzon		
Lebel	LeBlanc (LaSalle—Émard)		
Leef	Leitch		
Lemieux	Leung		
Liu	Lizon		
Lobb	Lukiwski		
Lunney	MacKay (Central Nova)		
MacKenzie	Martin		
Masse	Mathysen		
Mayes	McCallum		
McColeman	McKay (Scarborough—Guildwood)		
Menegakis	Merrifield		
Michaud	Miller		
Moore (Abitibi—Témiscamingue)	Moore (Port Moody—Westwood—Port Coquitlam)		
Moore (Fundy Royal)	Morin (Chicoutimi—Le Fjord)		
Morin (Notre-Dame-de-Grâce—Lachine)	Morin (Laurentides—Labelle)		
Morin (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot)	Mulcair		
Murray	Nantel		
Nash	Nicholls		
Nicholson	Norlock		
Nuncz-Melo	O'Connor		
O'Neill Gordon	Oda		
Opitz	Papillon		
Paradis	Patry		
Payne	Péclét		
Penashue	Perreault		
Pilon	Plamondon		
Poillievre	Preston		
Quach	Rae		
Rafferty	Raitt		
Rathgeber	Ravnigat		
Raynault	Regan		
Rcid	Rempel		
Richards	Richardson		
Rickford	Ritz		
Roussseau	Sandhu		
Savoie	Saxton		
Scarpaleggia	Schellenberger		
Seebach	Sellah		

NAYS

Nil

PAIRED

Nil

**The Speaker:** I declare the motion carried.

\* \* \*

## WAYS AND MEANS

MOTION NO. 5

**Hon. Peter Van Loan (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, CPC)** moved that a ways and means motion to implement certain provisions of the 2011 budget as updated on June 6, 2011 and other measures be concurred in.

**The Speaker:** Pursuant to order made Wednesday, September 28, 2011, the House will now proceed to the taking of the deferred recorded division on Motion No. 5 under ways and means.

[English]

**Hon. Gordon O'Connor:** Mr. Speaker, if you seek it, I believe you would find agreement to apply the vote from the previous motion to the current motion, with the Conservatives voting yes.

**The Speaker:** Is there unanimous consent to proceed in this fashion?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**Ms. Chris Charlton:** Mr. Speaker, the NDP members will be voting no.

**Ms. Judy Foote:** Mr. Speaker, the Liberals will be voting no.

[Translation]

**Mr. Louis Plamondon:** Mr. Speaker, the Bloc Québécois members will be voting in favour of this motion.

● (1900)

(The House divided on the motion, which was agreed to on the following division:)



Adjournment Proceedings

(Division No. 36)

YEAS

Members

Ablonczy	Adams
Aglukkaq	Albas
Albrecht	Alexander
Allen (Tobique—Mactaquac)	Allison
Ambler	Ambrose
Anders	Anderson
Armstrong	Ashfield
Aspin	Baird
Bateman	Bellavance
Benoit	Bernier
Bezan	Blaney
Block	Boughen
Braid	Breitkreuz
Brown (Newmarket—Aurora)	Brown (Barrie)
Bruinooge	Butt
Calandra	Calkins
Cannan	Carmichael
Carrie	Chisu
Chong	Clarke
Clement	Daniel
Davidson	Dechert
Del Mastro	Devolin
Dreeshen	Duncan (Vancouver Island North)
Dykstra	Findlay (Delta—Richmond East)
Finley (Haldimand—Norfolk)	Fletcher
Fortin	Galipeau
Gallant	Gill
Goldring	Goodyear
Gosal	Gourde
Grewal	Harper
Harris (Cariboo—Prince George)	Hawn
Hayes	Hiebert
Hillyer	Hoepfner
Holder	James
Kamp (Pitt Meadows—Maple Ridge—Mission)	Keddy (South Shore—St. Margaret's)
Kenney (Calgary Southeast)	Kent
Kerr	Komarnicki
Kramp (Prince Edward—Hastings)	Lake
Lauzon	Lebel
Leef	Leitch
Lemieux	Leung
Lizon	Lobb
Lukiwski	Lunney
MacKay (Central Nova)	MacKenzie
Mayes	McColeman
Menegakis	Merrifield
Miller	Moore (Port Moody—Westwood—Port Coquitlam)
Moore (Fundy Royal)	Nicholson
Norlock	O'Connor
O'Neill Gordon	Oda
Opitz	Paradis
Payne	Penashue
Plamondon	Poilievre
Preston	Raitt
Rathgeber	Reid
Rempel	Richards
Richardson	Rickford
Ritz	Saxton
Schellenberger	Seckack
Shea	Shipley
Shory	Smith
Sopuck	Sorenson
Stanton	Storseth
Strahl	Sweet
Tilson	Toet
Toews	Trost
Trottier	Truppe
Tweed	Uppal
Valcourt	Van Loan
Vellacott	Wallace
Warawa	Warkentin
Watson	Weston (West Vancouver—Sunshine Coast—Sea to
Sky Country)	Wilks
Weston (Saint John)	Wong
Williamson	Yelich
Woodworth	Young (Vancouver South)
Young (Oakville)	
Zimmer— 153	

NAYS

Members

Allen (Welland)	Andrews
Angus	Atamanenko
Aubin	Ayala
Bélanger	Bennett
Benskin	Bevington
Blanchette	Blanchette-Lamothe
Boivin	Borg
Boulerice	Boutin-Sweet
Brahmi	Brosseau
Byrne	Caron
Charlton	Chicoine
Chisholm	Choquette
Christopherson	Cleary
Coderre	Comartin
Côté	Cotler
Crowder	Cullen
Cuzner	Davies (Vancouver Kingsway)
Davies (Vancouver East)	Day
Dionne Labelle	Donnelly
Doré Lefebvre	Dubé
Duncan (Etobicoke North)	Duncan (Edmonton—Strathcona)
Dussault	Eyking
Foote	Freeman
Fry	Garrison
Genest	Genest-Jourdain
Godin	Goodale
Gravelle	Groguhé
Harris (Scarborough Southwest)	Hassainia
Hsu	Jacob
Julian	Karygiannis
Kellway	Lamoureux
Lapointe	Larose
Latendresse	LeBlanc (LaSalle—Émard)
Liu	Martin
Masse	Mathyszen
McCallum	McKay (Scarborough—Guildwood)
Michaud	Moore (Abitibi—Témiscamingue)
Morin (Chicoutimi—Le Fjord)	Morin (Notre-Dame-de-Grâce—Lachine)
Morin (Laurentides—Labelle)	Morin (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot)
Mulcair	Murray
Nantel	Nash
Nicholls	Nunez-Melo
Papillon	Patry
Péclet	Perreault
Pilon	Quach
Rac	Rafferty
Ravignat	Raynault
Regan	Rousseau
Sandhu	Savoie
Scarpaleggia	Sellah
Sgro	Sims (Newton—North Delta)
Sitsabaiesan	St-Denis
Stewart	Stoffer
Sullivan	Thibault
Toone	Tremblay
Trudeau	Turnel
Valeriote— 113	

PAIRED

Nil

The Speaker: I declare the motion carried.  
(Motion agreed to)

[English]

ADJOURNMENT PROCEEDINGS

A motion to adjourn the House under Standing Order 38 deemed to have been moved.

*Adjournment Proceedings**[Translation]*

## FLOODING IN MONTRÉGIE

**Mr. Matthew Dubé (Chambly—Borduas, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I am very honoured to continue on with the question regarding the flooding that affected my region so much back in May and June.

The question being asked at the time was whether our soldiers would help us with the cleanup. I would like to point out that the people of Chambly—Borduas, including myself, owe a debt of gratitude to the soldiers who helped us. The soldiers helped the flood victims a great deal during the crisis. The problem has nothing to do with their work or their dedication, but rather with the mandate this government refused to give them.

When we were talking about the cleanup required after the flooding, one of the greatest unanswered questions was whether the soldiers would be allowed to stay to help flood victims with the cleanup. Many people in my riding told me that the biggest problem was not the crisis itself, but rather what was going to happen when the crisis was over. The government members told us that once the water level dropped, the crisis would be over. But that was far from true.

I will give examples of the psychological effects that can persist and of the help that our citizens needed. Gontran Courtois, from Saint-Mathias-sur-Richelieu, had to evacuate from his house because his basement was flooded with 38 inches of water. He said it was clear that they had to leave their home and that if they could have fought, they would have. People were prepared to fight for their homes and to stay there to clean up the mess. Unfortunately, they were not able to do so. They did not have the equipment or the manpower needed. The army could have provided that manpower if the government had given it the mandate. Once again, I am not criticizing the work of our soldiers, but the mandate that the government should have given them.

The Minister of Public Safety said that the army did not assist the flood victims to avoid competing with the private sector. I think that is unacceptable. In reality, the private sector did not come to assist the flood victims and help with the cleanup. It was the public sector. In articles about the big cleanup, which I participated in myself, it is clear that our fire departments and our blue-collar municipal workers are the ones who came to help. There is no reason that the municipalities should have to foot the bill. For example, in Saint-Basile-le-Grand, the cleanup cost reached a total of \$150,000, and municipal employees were loaned to help with the cleanup. Meanwhile, the government had resources that could have helped these people, people who stood together and were prepared to help each other out, as we saw during the big cleanups.

I repeat: some soldiers came to help and we are very appreciative of that, but unfortunately, the government did not help.

• (1905)

**Mr. Chris Alexander (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of National Defence, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the hon. member for Chambly—Borduas for this important question that gives us an opportunity to set the record straight on this issue.

To begin, I must say that I heard him offer some criticism of our soldiers. I would like to assure him that the mandate given to the

members of the Canadian Forces serving in Montérégie this spring was identical to the mandate given to those serving in other places dealing with flooding. Our soldiers took on the challenge in Montérégie with the same degree of professionalism and the same level of commitment as they do elsewhere and they put a lot of heart into their service. Our soldiers are not indifferent. They are never indifferent to the plight of their fellow Canadians, particularly in times of emergency or natural disaster when the homes and property of families, vulnerable individuals and seniors are in jeopardy.

Over the course of my speech, I would like to remind the hon. member just how hard the Canadian Forces worked to take on the challenge of the flooding in Montérégie. They were extremely flexible and demonstrated an unmatched level of professionalism for which they are very well known both in Quebec and in the other provinces of Canada.

The request was made by the Province of Quebec on May 4. The Canadian Forces began arriving in Montérégie within 8 hours. The advance guard of the contingent that was mobilized to deal with this situation arrived very quickly. The next day, May 5, there were 500 members of the Canadian Forces on site. These individuals were mobilized by the operations group for eastern Canada, which the hon. member knows is based in Montreal.

As the hon. member is surely aware, the water reached peak levels on May 6, 7 and 8 when the Canadian Forces also reached the height of their mobilization at 844 members on site in Montérégie to deal with the devastating flooding.

*[English]*

We are very sympathetic with the plight of those affected by floods in Quebec, but let us also keep in mind that this was an exceptional year with two rounds of flooding in Manitoba and forest fires in Ontario, Saskatchewan and Alberta.

Every response by Canada's armed forces needs to be seen in the context of the national obligations that they have, and this year they were really unprecedented, for reasons that we all know.

In the past year, the Canadian forces supported the people of Newfoundland and Labrador in the aftermath of hurricane Igor, rescued stranded motorists after a violent snowstorm in Ontario, provided security at the Vancouver Olympics and Paralympics, as well as the G8 and G20 summits.

In replying to the member a second time, I would be very happy just to go over some of the details of the intervention that our forces undertook in Montérégie which saved hundreds of homes from further damage and which really prevented a difficult situation, a situation of exceptionally historical high floods from being much worse.



*Adjournment Proceedings*

• (1910)

[Translation]

**Mr. Matthew Dubé:** Mr. Speaker, I would quickly like to remind my colleague that we did not intend to criticize the Canadian armed forces. The first mayor I spoke with after the election was the mayor of Saint-Basile-le-Grand, Mr. Bernard Gagnon. He reiterated some points, with which I was very much in agreement, such as the fact that members of the Canadian armed forces did an exceptional job helping the victims.

I would remind my hon. colleague that the question was whether the government would send the Canadian Forces to help with the cleanup, and that was not done. I will again repeat the comments of the Minister of Public Safety, who said that the Canadian armed forces would not help the victims clean up because he did not want the Canadian Forces to compete with the private sector. The people who came were not from the private sector. Our own people mobilized. They were from the public sector, the firefighters and blue-collar workers. It was our municipalities that rallied around us. Unfortunately, the government was unable to provide the assistance required.

**Mr. Chris Alexander:** Mr. Speaker, our hon. colleague should know that the Canadian Forces—our army, navy and air force—are there to respond to emergency situations. They evacuated residents from the disaster areas; they protected infrastructure and hundreds of homes; they kept major roads passable; they filled and distributed thousands of sand bags—as many as 224,000 sand bags were distributed; and they spent 1,100 hours helping the community and doing check visits.

The contribution of the Canadian armed forces was very tangible. They were called out to an emergency. The waters returned and reached new heights, which resulted in the redeployment of the Canadian armed forces toward the end of May. That is the usual response to an emergency situation and we are very proud of their efforts.

[English]

## CHILD CARE

**Ms. Jean Crowder (Nanaimo—Cowichan, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I am once again raising in the House the question of where the plan is to make child care affordable for all Canadians. I raise it in the context that it is not only about social policy but is also good economic sense.

The group of organizations called A Living Wage for Families put out a public policy document that talks about how much good economic sense this is. It indicated that:

In 2007, over 75% of Canadian mothers participated in the labour force, yet, there were only child care spaces for 20.3% of children under age six in Canada. Moreover child care costs are on average 22% of the net family income for Canadians, well above other developed countries which average at 13%. Parents cannot work or take training without affordable, high quality, secure child care.

The article gives an example:

A publicly funded child care system in BC, similar to the one in Quebec, would reduce monthly child care costs to \$280.00, or from 19.9% to 6.3% of the overall budget. This results in the hourly living rate decreasing to \$14.72 an hour, a reduction of \$4.09.

Of course, there are two things about this.

One is that quality, licensed, regulated, publicly funded child care actually contributes to the economic bottom line because it allows mothers and fathers to go to work and be assured that their children are well looked after.

Second, the submission to the finance committee 2012 pre-budget consultation by First Call: BC Child and Youth Advocacy Coalition makes a recommendation that Canada place a high priority on increasing Canada's annual investment in early childhood care and early learning from our current 0.25% of GDP to the recommended UNICEF benchmark of 1% of GDP. We can see that we have a long way to go on that.

In addition, although this is provincial, here is the impact of what is happening in my riding of Nanaimo—Cowichan. The Kaatza child care in Lake Cowichan is closing its doors as a result of a provincial government announcement around subsidized funding, and in the last six months, the following child care programs in my region have closed: Footsteps Preschool, Serenity Cove Children's Centre, Jitterbugs Childcare, Majestic Cedars Child Care, Just Like Home Family Child Care, and Tree Tops Daycare.

An article today in one of the Nanaimo papers said that adjustments to child care subsidies worry parents. It talked about the fact that Nanaimo's poorest families are pulling their children out of after-school care because they can no longer afford the fees.

The bottom line result is that children under the age of six, five-year-old children in kindergarten, are sometimes being given a key and sent home to look after themselves because their parents simply cannot afford the after-school child care for their kids and they cannot afford to quite their jobs. Surely in this day and age we should be looking at the consequences that will have for children and their families.

In the same article, the owner of an after-school care facility says, "Parents have been put between a rock and a hard place. I'm seeing them choose between paying for daycare or putting food on the table...and if they choose food on the table, what happens to their children while they're at work?"

It goes on to say that parents have said they are working fewer hours to be home with their children after school, or they're sending their five-year-old home for a few hours with a house key, as I mentioned.

The NDP MLA, Leonard Krog, said that the new policy rules are forcing families to make poor choices that could potentially put children at risk.

My question to the parliamentary secretary is this: where is the plan for a national child care strategy?

• (1915)

**Ms. Kellie Leitch (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Human Resources and Skills Development and to the Minister of Labour, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to tell the House about our government's child care policies.

### *Adjournment Proceedings*

Our government recognizes that families are the building blocks of our society and that getting the best possible start in life is crucial to ensuring that children reach their full potential. That is why this government is investing in the well-being of all families, including those with young children.

Our approach to child care, the universal child care plan, respects the role of parents in determining how best to care for their children and recognizes the responsibility of the provincial and territorial governments for the delivery of child care services. Our plan puts choice in the hands of parents and helps them choose the child care option that suits their families' needs, whether they work in the paid labour force or stay at home with their children, whether they live in a small town, rural community or urban area.

In 2011-12, the federal government is providing \$6 billion in support of early childhood development and child care through transfers to the provinces and territories. In addition, we are providing direct support through the universal child care benefit and tax measure, such as the child care expense deduction and the child tax credit. This is the largest investment in the history of Canada.

[Translation]

In the 2010 budget, we reaffirmed our commitment to offering Canadian parents a reasonable choice with regard to child care.

[English]

We improved the taxation of the universal child care benefit to ensure that single parent families are treated fairly. We enhanced the delivery of child benefits for parents with joint custody. The child tax credit introduced in 2007 complements this benefit by providing up to \$300 of tax relief annually to more than three million Canadian families with children.

[Translation]

Our government also invested in child care spaces to help parents find a better balance between child care and career responsibilities.

[English]

Our approach has been providing tangible results for Canadians. A growing body of Canadian and international research suggests that the provision of cash benefits is an effective way to improve child outcomes, especially for younger children in low-income families. Our government provides \$250 million per year to the provinces and territories through the Canada social transfer to help support the creation of new child care spaces across the country.

Since 2007, many provinces and territories have announced plans for the creation of new child care spaces, over 102,000 so far. Others are investing in enhancing the quality of these spaces and their affordability.

The family is the building block of our society and our government will continue to support Canadian families. We believe Canadian parents know what is best for their children. A one-size-fits-all model does not work for Canada's diverse families. We are providing choice in child care by putting more money in the pockets of parents to choose the child care of their choice.

• (1920)

**Ms. Jean Crowder:** Mr. Speaker, clearly, there is no choice in child care when there are spaces for only 20.3% of children under the age of six.

I will come back to the prebudget submission, First Call: BC Child and Youth Advocacy Coalition stated:

Canada's failure to properly support young children and their families...is resulting in high rates of vulnerability in children. This vulnerability translates into weakened educational outcomes, health inequities and long-term loss of productive potential. This is a recipe for unsustainability and rising social costs.

I have a quote from the Canadian Coalition for the Rights of Children, which states:

Developing the full potential of every child in Canada is a good economic investment, in the context of an aging population, as well as the right thing to do.

Currently, the government plan amounts to \$3 a day for child care. When will the government admit that it has a role in developing and implementing a national child care strategy?

**Ms. Kellie Leitch:** Mr. Speaker, our government is making a number of other investments to support families with children, such as: the Canada child tax benefit, which includes the national child benefit supplement for low-income families; the children's fitness tax credit and the child arts tax credit; employment insurance maternal and paternal benefits; and the Canada pension plan survivor benefit for dependent children of a contributor who is deceased or disabled. Together, with almost \$6 billion in support for early childhood development and early learning and child care, these measures represent a total investment in children and their families of \$19 billion in 2011-12.

The family is the building block of our society and our government will continue to support Canadian families. We believe Canadian parents know what is best for their kids. A one-size-fits-all model does not work for Canadian families. We are providing choice in child care by putting more money in the pockets of parents to choose the child care of their choice.

Due to our actions, average Canadian families have \$3,000 more in their pockets, money that they can spend on their children and families.

G8 SUMMIT

**Hon. Geoff Regan (Halifax West, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, may I say at the outset it is a pleasure to speak in the House when the members are on such good behaviour and I can be assured of the full attention of the House.



*Adjournment Proceedings*

When the Conservatives formed government, they rode into town on a horse called “accountability”. The Conservatives promised to be an accountable government but there have been many examples where they have failed to meet the standard they promised. As a good example of this lack of accountability, since the fall session started the Treasury Board president has reportedly been asked over 30 questions about his role in doling out \$50 million in G8 funds in his own riding, one of the most extravagant pork-barrel schemes in Canadian history as a matter of fact.

The minister's slush fund stonewalling has not gone unnoticed. When we consider that this is a government that brought forward an accountability act, that said it was going to be answerable, that it would pay attention to Parliament and so forth, it is remarkable that there is a minister who will not even stand and answer questions. One pundit recently had a particularly harsh assessment and noted that the mute minister's deafening silence made a mockery of the government's promise to be open and accountable. He added that the minister “has become a figure of ridicule as he sits silently in his seat each day, like a child banished to the corner for a timeout”.

That is a pretty frank and harsh assessment. I would think that a minister would be embarrassed by that. I would think that a minister would be determined to get up in the House and defend his record. For some reason, on more than 30 questions the minister has refused to do that. It is worrisome that a government that talks about accountability as much as the present one has would refuse to be accountable at all to people who are elected by Canadians to hold it accountable, people who are elected to come here and ask questions and try to ensure that the taxpayers' dollars are being properly spent.

One question, among others, is: Why will he not explain how he convinced his cabinet colleagues to approve a \$50 million fund that was supposedly for border security? According to all the documents, including the budget and all the estimates, the \$50 million was for border security.

The Treasury Board president's riding is a long way from the border. It is clear that what he did instead was take that money and spend it on pork-barrel projects in his riding.

Municipal records from Bracebridge and Gravenhurst paint a damning portrait. The minutes of a December 5, 2008 meeting of a group including the minister and some of the mayors are marked as confidential. They show that this fund was being run out of the Treasury Board minister's riding office, not out of some department. It was not being overseen by officials. It was being run out of his own office. Under the heading “Review of Project Summary Submissions to Date”, it says, “It was noted that all submissions are to be sent to” the minister's “Huntsville constituency Office and would there be distributed electronically to all committee members”.

Why will he not explain how it is that with this fund for border security he sat in the back room of his office with his pals and personally decided on which pork-barrel projects he would bestow his blessing?

• (1925)

**Mr. Pierre Poilievre (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Transport, Infrastructure and Communities and for the Federal Economic Development Agency for Southern Ontario, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, let me pleasantly surprise the hon. member by informing him that the Auditor General reported that all 32 projects met the program's conditions and that the Minister of Transport approved all projects.

Every dollar was spent on eligible costs of approved projects. All the dollars spent resulted in public infrastructure and all were identified by municipalities and the province as priorities. Every single dollar is accounted for. None of the dollars were misspent. No one profited illicitly. These seem to be the criteria for determining a successful execution of public administration.

**Hon. Geoff Regan:** Mr. Speaker, this is one of those cases where the spokesperson on behalf of the government takes a question from the opposition side and answers a different one. It is as if I did not ask the question I asked or did not raise the issue I did at all.

The fact that after the President of the Treasury Board and his pals decided how the money should be spent it was rubber-stamped by the Minister of Transport and met some criteria that was totally unrelated to border security, for which this money was supposed to be spent, is totally irrelevant.

Is my hon. colleague actually suggesting that he could have a \$50 million fund for his riding, or that there could be one for my riding? Is he suggesting that money could be transferred from another fund to every MP in the House? That is a ridiculous notion.

I challenge my hon. colleague to suggest to me that he could have the same kind of access to funds as the President of the Treasury Board had to spend in his riding. It is an outrageous statement.

**Mr. Pierre Poilievre:** Mr. Speaker, it is a long distance to the seat of the member of the third party, so perhaps he did not hear me. The good news is that all 32 projects met the program's conditions and the Minister of Transport was involved in approving every single one of them.

There is more good news for my hon. colleague. All of the eligible costs for the project were approved. As well, all of the money was spent on public infrastructure. Every dollar has been accounted for and no one profited illicitly. These are all facts confirmed by the Auditor General.

[Translation]

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bruce Stanton):** The motion to adjourn the House is now deemed to have been adopted. Accordingly, this House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 10 a.m., pursuant to Standing Order 24(1).

(The House adjourned at 7:29 p.m.)





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HOUSE OF COMMONS  
CHAMBRE DES COMMUNES  
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# House of Commons Debates

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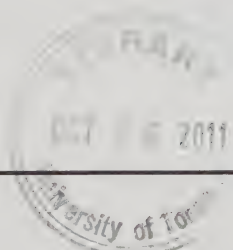
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OFFICIAL REPORT  
(HANSARD)

**Tuesday, October 4, 2011**

**Speaker: The Honourable Andrew Scheer**



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(Table of Contents appears at back of this issue.)



# HOUSE OF COMMONS

Tuesday, October 4, 2011

The House met at 10 a.m.

---

*Prayers*

---

## ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

● (1005)

[English]

### ENVIRONMENT AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

**The Speaker:** I have the honour to lay upon the table pursuant to subsection 23(5) of the Auditor General Act the report of the Commissioner of the Environment and Sustainable Development to the House of Commons for the year 2011.

This report is permanently referred to the Standing Committee on Environment and Sustainable Development.

\* \* \*

### KEEPING CANADA'S ECONOMY AND JOBS GROWING ACT

**Hon. Ted Menzies (for the Minister of Finance)** moved for leave to introduce Bill C-13, An Act to implement certain provisions of the 2011 budget as updated on June 6, 2011 and other measures.

(Motions deemed adopted, bill read the first time and printed)

\* \* \*

[Translation]

### COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE

#### LIBRARY OF PARLIAMENT

**Mr. Royal Galipeau (Ottawa—Orléans, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to table, in both official languages, the first report of the Standing Joint Committee on the Library of Parliament regarding quorum and the mandate of the committee.

\* \* \*

[English]

### NATIONAL STRATEGY FOR SERIOUS INJURY REDUCTION IN AMATEUR SPORT ACT

**Mr. Glenn Thibeault (Sudbury, NDP)** moved for leave to introduce Bill C-319, An Act respecting a national strategy to reduce the incidence of serious injury in amateur sport.

He said: Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to stand in the House to introduce this bill entitled, “National Strategy for Serious Injury Reduction in Amateur Sport Act”. This legislation would mandate that the federal government convene a conference of first ministers of health, as well as members of the athletic, medical and health communities in order to implement a strategy for tackling this growing public health concern.

Specifically, the bill outlines a strategy for the federal government to create a national sports injury surveillance and data collection system, establish substantive concussion guidelines, including a sufficient deterrent mechanism to ensure athletes are not being returned to play against expressed medical recommendations, create national training and educational standards for coaches and other persons involved in amateur sport, and institute incentivized funding guidelines to assist amateur sport organizations in implementing these protocols.

Since introducing a similar bill in the last Parliament, I have received overwhelming support from right across the country on this bill. It is my hope that my colleagues from across the aisle will assist me in getting the national sports injury reduction strategy passed as soon as possible.

(Motions deemed adopted, bill read the first time and printed)

\* \* \*

[Translation]

### OFFICIAL LANGUAGES ACT

**Mrs. Maria Mourani (Ahuntsic, BQ)** moved for leave to introduce Bill C-320, An Act to amend the Official Languages Act (Charter of the French Language) and to make consequential amendments to other Acts.

She said: Mr. Speaker, as you certainly know, Quebec is a francophone nation, not a bilingual one. This nation has enacted legislation called Bill 101, the Charter of the French Language, which obviously applies to all the institutions under its jurisdiction as well as to most spheres of life.

This bill, an Act to amend the Official Languages Act (Charter of the French Language) and to make consequential amendments to other Acts, would require the federal government to undertake not to obstruct the application of the Charter of the French Language in Quebec. In other words, it means that that Bill 101 would apply to all federal institutions in Quebec.

*Routine Proceedings*

I encourage all my colleagues from Quebec to support this important bill to protect our language, be it in provincial, municipal, educational or federal institutions.

(Motions deemed adopted, bill read the first time and printed)

\* \* \*

[English]

**CANADA POST CORPORATION ACT**

**Mr. Merv Tweed (Brandon—Souris, CPC)** moved for leave to introduce Bill C-321, An Act to amend the Canada Post Corporation Act (library materials).

He said: Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to introduce this bill, as I have in previous times in the House.

This bill moves to guarantee a postal rate for libraries for interchange and to provide books to Canadians at a reduced postal rate. It also moves to increase the access, including the definition of library material from books, magazines, records, CDs, CD-ROMs, audiovisual cassettes, DVDs and other audiovisual materials.

I would advise members of the House that this bill had been passed unanimously by all members of Parliament in the last session and had gone to the Senate just prior to the call of the election.

I look forward to moving this bill forward again.

(Motions deemed adopted, bill read the first time and printed)

\* \* \*

• (1010)

**PETITIONS****RIGHTS OF THE UNBORN**

**Mr. Blake Richards (Wild Rose, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I have the pleasure to present a petition today from a number of residents of my riding, mostly from Olds, Alberta. They want to petition Parliament to recognize unborn children as separate victims when harmed or killed during attacks against their mothers.

**ASBESTOS**

**Mr. Pat Martin (Winnipeg Centre, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to present a petition today signed by literally thousands of Canadians from all across Canada who call upon Parliament to take note that asbestos is the greatest industrial killer that the world has ever known.

The petitioners point out that more Canadians now die from asbestos than all other industrial and occupational causes combined and yet Canada continues to be one of the largest producers and exporters of asbestos in the world. They call upon Parliament to take note that Canada also spends millions of dollars subsidizing the asbestos industry and blocking international efforts to curb its use.

Therefore, the petitioners call upon the government to ban asbestos in all of its forms and institute a just transition program for any displaced asbestos workers and the communities in which they live. They call upon the government to end all subsidies of asbestos both in Canada and abroad and to stop blocking international health and safety conventions designed to protect workers from asbestos, such as the Rotterdam Convention.

**FISHERIES**

**Hon. Geoff Regan (Halifax West, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to present a petition from residents of Nova Scotia who draw the attention of the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans to the need for his department to fund a two year program to restock the Sackville River with salmon.

This request follows an act of vandalism in November 2009 when some idiot cut an oil line to an oil tank and caused the leakage of several hundred litres of furnace oil to run into the Little Sackville River. It was a terrible moment. It was a stupid thing to do.

After more than 20 years of work by residents and, in particular, the Sackville Rivers Association, the once polluted Sackville River could once again support fish life. This, of course, was a setback. That work has been undone by this oil spill.

Therefore, the petitioners ask the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans to immediately fund a two year restocking program for the Sackville River and assist the Sackville Rivers Association in any remediation the river habitat may require.

**THE ENVIRONMENT**

**Mr. David Tilson (Dufferin—Caledon, CPC):** Madam Speaker, I have a petition from Canadians across the country who are concerned about a large mega quarry in Melancthon township in Dufferin county, Ontario, which will be the largest open pit quarry in Canada of over 2,300 acres. It will be about three miles across.

The petitioners are concerned about a number of things, one of which is based on the proposed mega quarry application. There are distinct issues relating to the use of water operations based on NAFTA considerations that may have a substantially negative financial implication federally and provincially.

These petitioners call upon the Government of Canada to conduct an environmental assessment under the authority of the Canadian Environmental Assessment Act on a proposed Highland Companies mega quarry development.

\* \* \*

**QUESTIONS ON THE ORDER PAPER**

**Mr. Tom Lukiwski (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, CPC):** Madam Speaker, I ask that all questions be allowed to stand.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Is that agreed?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.



## GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[English]

### BUSINESS OF SUPPLY

OPPOSITION MOTION—NATIONAL SUICIDE PREVENTION STRATEGY

**Hon. Bob Rae (Toronto Centre, Lib.) moved:**

That the House agree that suicide is more than a personal tragedy, but is also a serious public health issue and public policy priority; and, further, that the House urge the government to work cooperatively with the provinces, territories, representative organizations from First Nations, Inuit, and Métis people, and other stakeholders to establish and fund a National Suicide Prevention Strategy, which among other measures would promote a comprehensive and evidence-driven approach to deal with this terrible loss of life.

Madam Speaker, I think all of us in the House will recognize and understand that suicide is something that has touched all of us in one way or the other, either as family members or as friends. What we have also come to realize more and more is that this issue can no longer be regarded simply as one of a personal tragedy, which it undoubtedly is, but it also needs to be recognized as a political issue in the sense that it is an issue that the public needs to take notice of. The good news in all of this is that, if we take notice of it and take action, there are actually things we can do to reduce the number of people who lose their lives in this very tragic way.

The statistics, frankly, are overwhelming in the industrial world. We have a relatively high suicide rate in Canada. We are the only modern industrial country that does not have a national strategy to reduce the level of suicide, to save lives in a very significant way.

I think Canadians would be surprised to learn some of the statistics. The fact that over the last 30 years at least 100,000 Canadians have taken their own life, which is a truly remarkable number.

Today, the president of the Canadian Psychiatric Association told us that around the world last year nearly one million people took their own lives. We have developed this capacity as societies to take statistics and to get the numbers but it is important for us as a country to take the steps that will make a difference.

• (1015)

[Translation]

Clearly, if we demonstrate the political will to do something, we can find solutions. For example, non-partisan discussions were held in Quebec and people agreed that the number of young people taking their own lives was far too high and that it was completely unacceptable. The province decided to do something. Quebec insisted that the topic be discussed in schools in order to open the dialogue, fight the stigma and ensure that no subject would be taboo.

We must do everything we can to encourage youth to talk about their emotional health. It should be noted that in Quebec, the youth suicide rate has dropped dramatically in the past 10 years. However, the rest of Canada has not had the same kind of success and within federal jurisdiction we are seeing a completely unacceptable suicide rate among veterans, former soldiers and aboriginals—all in a society known for its compassion and openness.

### *Business of Supply*

[English]

I hope we can all agree that a good society is, among other things, a place where people care about each other. It is a place where, quite simply, we care about what happens to ourselves, we care about what happens to our families, we care about what happens to our friends. However, our compassion does not end at the end of our garden. Our compassion extends to our neighbours. Our understanding of what we in Canada face has to include the fact that there are a great many Canadians who today are in turmoil. Today, this day, as many as 10 people will take their own lives. We could all through a bit of imagination think about who those people are.

I think of a young girl living on a native reserve. Perhaps she has been abused as a child. Perhaps she is living in a house where there are as many as 10, 12 or 15 people sharing a room. She goes to school and on the computer at school she sees a very different world. She sees a world of wealth. She sees a world of opportunity. She sees a world of affluence. She looks around her community and she sees the opposite. She asks herself, “Where is the hope? What hope do I have?”.

I think of a young boy who discovers in his early adolescence that he is gay. He realizes that his sexual identity is not that of the majority of people in his classroom. He sees himself in a different way and is looking to find the ways in which he can be as much a person as the person sitting next to him at school. Because he is seen as different, he is bullied. Perhaps one of his classmates starts making fun of him on the Internet, starts singling him out.

I think of the young teenagers who are in turmoil for all kinds of reasons, all of the biological and hormonal and other changes that are happening and the bewildering world in which they live and in which they have to show themselves to be okay. They are not allowed to be anything other than okay. Perhaps they live in a house where it is hard for them to say, “I’m not okay”.

I think of the veterans who come back from the trauma of the battlefield in Afghanistan who are never allowed to show weakness on the battlefield, who are never allowed to show a moment of vulnerability. When they return, they find a world where they do not know how to be vulnerable. They do not know how to deal with the world in which they are now living, the mundane everyday world in which most of us live every day.

We cannot explain all of the circumstances.

The number of seniors, for example, who take their own lives is remarkably high, maybe for reasons that have to do with their loneliness, with their vulnerability, with their having felt that they have lived a life and now cannot find meaning or purpose to where they are.

Mental health issues affect one in five Canadians, yet it is an issue that is rarely discussed. We have fundraising drives for breast cancer, prostate cancer, heart conditions and all of the other physical maladies, as well we should, but we do not have a run for suicide. We do not do a walk for schizophrenia very often. We do not talk about depression a great deal. We let people suffer in silence. We pretend that it is not a problem.

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We have made progress. It is not as bad as it was in days gone by. We have changed the legal structures. We have accepted as a society and have learned how to celebrate sexual identity. The Prime Minister gave a wonderful speech in the House, a statement of reconciliation with the first nations people. We have made some of the steps that we need to make to begin to create a climate of hope, a climate of mutual care, a climate of love, but our actions do not follow the words.

• (1020)

The motion that is before the House today is one which says let us talk about this. Let us have a conversation where we discuss frankly and candidly what should not be happening in this country.

Gay kids should not be bullied in school. Schools need to learn how to help kids celebrate who they are whatever their sexual identity. We should celebrate who we are. That is the meaning of dignity. If we are a society that believes in dignity, compassion and care, every child has to have pride in that identity and pride in who he or she is. And it goes well beyond childhood.

Having talked about the motion with some colleagues and having decided to put it forward as an opposition day motion, I hope we will have the support of the whole House. I hope we will have a good conversation today. I hope this will be an opportunity for the House to show itself as it can be when we want to talk about issues that are important. We are behind the public. The public is ahead of us.

Today I held a press conference with Stephanie Richardson, whose daughter took her own life last year in circumstances that are well known in the Ottawa area and which brought forward an incredible outpouring of emotion, compassion and feeling in the community. That family has done a remarkable thing in turning a terrible tragedy into a moment where they can perhaps teach people what this is all about.

We need to do this as a Parliament. The federal government runs the fifth largest health care system in the country. We are responsible constitutionally for aboriginal people, and we are responsible for veterans and for our armed forces. The federal government can be a leader in this field, but it has not been. People say to me, "What about your party when you were in government?" It did not do enough. Nobody can say from a partisan perspective, "We have done all we can".

Speaking very personally, having lost some friends to suicide, I can tell the House about the sense of bewilderment one feels. What else could I have done? What else could I have said? What else could I have seen?

We know there are strategies that work. We know that if we start to talk about it, it makes a difference. We know that if we begin to create the architecture of support for people and for families, we know if we address the underlying mental health and social and economic issues, we will in fact reduce the level of suicide. We know that we can find a way to address this question, and we know that it is within our realm of responsibility to do so.

I am one of those people who thinks the national government has the responsibility to work with the provinces in a co-ordinated fashion, not to dictate to anyone, because seven out of the ten provinces already have developed strategies. However, none of them

are sufficiently funded. None of them have enough grounding in this national conversation which needs to happen.

On behalf of the Liberal Party, supported by my colleague from Vancouver, I have moved this motion. However, we do not claim any monopoly of virtue on the motion. We do not claim that we somehow have achieved a breakthrough that others are not party to. There is no reason why any member of Parliament should feel that this is being put forward in some kind of a partisan way. It is not.

Yes, there will be questions about what could be done, and there will be issues about how we can allocate the funds we need to make sure the conversation happens, but we also understand there are at times issues that go beyond politics.

• (1025)

I have often wondered why it is that governments have such difficulty in accepting that mental illness is every bit as much an illness as is a physical illness. My own modest assessment is that there are two reasons.

The first reason is that there is a stigma and taboo with respect to mental illness that is still with us. We are not as deep and dark in the dark ages or Victorian times perhaps as before, but we still have to recognize and admit that it is not seen in the same way and it is not discussed in the same way as it should be. We have made some changes, but we need to make more.

The second reason is that people feel, and governments reflect this, that it is an illness but it is not like a physical illness, that it is something different. People feel there is not a whole lot they can do, that it is not something that can be easily or readily solved.

This ignores a very basic fact. We have made huge progress in the treatment of mental illness. Conditions that were a guarantee of a lifetime of incarceration as recently as 50 or 60 years ago are being treated today very effectively with medication and treatment that actually works.

We are behind in research. We are behind in funding. We are behind in support. We are behind in housing. We are behind in all the things that need to be done to integrate all of these services together. These things are solvable. These are matters of political will. These are not conditions which we cannot do anything about.

Over 120 years ago a very famous French sociologist, Émile Durkheim, wrote a text called *Le Suicide*.

• (1030)

[Translation]

This gentleman, one of sociology's pioneers, made an important observation. He said that an event such as suicide reflects a lack of solidarity within society. Until then, suicide was considered a personal act that had no social explanation. But Durkheim said that, on the contrary, it could be explained.

The love that each of us must show our neighbours is a permanent sign of our compassion and what it means to be a citizen and be part of a good society.



[English]

A good society is marked by how people care for each other and by solidarity. We are talking about what we owe each other and how our collective failure to reflect that sense of solidarity and connection in our actions contributes to the sense of alienation and bewilderment that is a prelude to a person's decision to commit suicide.

Not all of the explanations are easy. Many of them continue to baffle people. We all have friends who have died in this terrible way and we wonder what could have caused them to do so.

What we do know is there are things we can do. It is not a hopeless situation. We have to take what my grandmother used to call "the human footsteps". Every day we need to move forward by taking the human footsteps that will lead us to the progress we must make as Canadians and as a society. This is a frontier we must cross together. We need to better understand this world of anger, self-anger, of violence that implodes or explodes. We need to share that understanding. We need to address it. We need to take the steps as a society to make a difference.

Hence, we need a strategy that will prevent people from taking their own lives, one that will allow them to return to living full, happy and productive lives. That is what it means to live in a country where we care for one another.

• (1035)

**Mr. Colin Carrie (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Health, CPC):** Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague from Toronto Centre for bringing this important issue forward. As he so eloquently stated in his speech, suicide is something that affects us all, our families and our friends. I am certain every member of the House believes that as a government we should be doing more in that regard.

The member is aware that the Minister of Health is from the north where there is an extremely high rate of suicide. She is committed to doing more.

He is also aware of the establishment of the Mental Health Commission of Canada that was endorsed by all of the provinces and territories except for Quebec.

As the member has a unique perspective, I would like him to discuss jurisdictional issues in his capacity as both a federal and provincial politician as well as having been a leader of two parties.

He is aware of the draft mental health strategy put forth by the Mental Health Commission that would likely address the elements of suicide prevention of which he speaks. The government is trying to work collaboratively with the provinces and territories within its jurisdiction.

Does my colleague think that the federal government should dictate how the provinces and territories deliver health care services within their jurisdictions? That has been a challenge with many of these national strategies. Could he comment on that?

**Hon. Bob Rae:** Madam Speaker, as I said in my speech, one of the areas in which the federal government could show leadership is by clearly understanding what it is responsible for. It is responsible for veterans, the armed forces and the RCMP. Many of those people

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are affected by significant mental health issues. The federal public service is an area where we can show leadership and do more work.

The member mentioned aboriginal issues and the minister has discussed this as well. We must recognize that we have been unable to do what is required without programs in place at the federal level. We need to be leaders in the field.

I appreciate the member's relatively kind remarks, which I am not used to from the other side, with respect to my previous provincial experience. The provinces are sensitive to the federal government telling them what it is they must do. However, that is not how it works.

I hope that the mental health issue will be front and centre on the table during the government's next round of discussions with the provinces. I believe the provinces will be ready and willing to discuss it. Of course, the provinces will want to deal with the issue of funding. However, the federal government could lead with best practices as the provinces have been doing better than others in that regard and have shown some success at reducing the number of incidents.

We have a universal problem with inaccessibility to necessary services across the country particularly by adolescents. We cannot look in the mirror and say that we have done enough. There have been many instances of kids running away from home with nowhere to go. We do not have the treatment centres we require in Canada at the provincial level.

Those are some ideas. I would be happy to discuss others. If one were to enter into discussions with—

**The Deputy Speaker:** Order, please. I am sure the hon. member will have more time to elaborate.

Questions and comments, the hon. member for Vancouver East.

**Ms. Libby Davies (Vancouver East, NDP):** Madam Speaker, I thank the member for Toronto Centre for bringing this important motion forward. It is good that all parties are having this debate and that we are focusing our attention on this enormously important public health issue. This goes beyond the issue of personal tragedy. It is a public health issue.

The motion speaks to establishing a fund for a national suicide prevention strategy. To follow up on the parliamentary secretary's comments, I believe there is a great vacuum and dearth of federal leadership. We have seen some work done by the Mental Health Commission, but there has not been any focus on a suicide prevention strategy. Rather than suggest that the provinces and territories would have their toes stepped on, I think there would be a welcoming and opening of debate and dialogue if the motion were to pass in the House and the federal government were to act upon it.

Would the member speak more to what he envisions in terms of establishing a national suicide prevention strategy fund?

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• (1040)

**Hon. Bob Rae:** Madam Speaker, I have visited the member's riding on many occasions and think that our ridings share many qualities in terms of some of the social challenges they both face.

The reason we discussed a fund is quite simple. It is not about dictating to the provinces. We are saying we do not regard the Mental Health Commission as a boutique project. If it is to succeed it must be followed by a serious commitment to move these programs forward.

To be fair, I believe that the mental health initiative, which I have certainly supported, is an area wherein the Prime Minister actually has recognized that governments have not done enough. There is a lot that we must do. We need to sit down with the provinces and talk about what steps need to be taken, how a fund could be put in place, what it would be used for and how the provinces would draw upon it.

I will use a phrase I have used in another place at another time. We do not need another federal boutique project. We need a serious exercise in partnership. We must recognize that the federal government runs the fifth largest health care system in the country. It is not a bit player; it is a major player and it must take its responsibilities seriously as we move forward.

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, I will pick up on the word used by the leader in terms of partnerships.

As an MLA for 18 years in the province of Manitoba and as a health care critic I am aware that trying to get stakeholders together is an issue. I am talking specifically about stakeholders from the different school divisions and to a certain degree the municipal governments. I do recognize there are stakeholders at the government level, the non-profit level and those individuals who have a vested interest.

Could the leader comment in terms of why that leadership to bring stakeholders together to draft the overall strategy must come from Ottawa?

**Hon. Bob Rae:** Madam Speaker, we have done it before. It has been done regarding cancer. There are a number of issues where the federal government has played a useful role.

We are way behind the experts in the field in psychiatric hospitals, in community-based care systems and associations across the country, and those who have been clients of the mental health care system and are part of very active patient groups in provinces and cities across the country. There is a huge network of people working in this field.

I am not suggesting for a moment that somehow we are inventing answers. As we speak, the Canadian Association for Suicide Prevention is meeting in Vancouver. The association has come forward with a strategy it wants to recommend to government.

We do not need to reinvent anything. We are not imposing anything. We are using this debate to point to specific actions the government can take. We hope that will be the outcome of this debate.

**Mr. Colin Carrie (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Health, CPC):** Madam Speaker, I am pleased to rise in the House to speak to the importance this government places on mental health of Canadians and in particular on the prevention of suicide.

What is the face of suicide? Suicide is preventable. Many of those who attempt suicide want to live, but are overcome with grief or emotional pain and cannot find any other way to handle a situation that has become impossible to bear.

Most people who commit suicide give warning signs or hints of their intentions. Community-based organizations across our country help people in their jurisdictions learn how to recognize these signs and how to respond to them. Four out of five people who die by suicide have made at least one previous attempt. Suicide occurs across all age, economic, social and ethnic boundaries.

Statistics Canada's 2007 figures regarding suicide in Canada show it as one of the top 10 leading causes of death in our country, accounting for over 3,700 deaths. Males die by suicide more than three times as often as females, but females are three times more likely to attempt it than males. As well, the survey revealed that over 14% of Canadians have thought about suicide and more than 3% of Canadians have attempted suicide in their lifetimes.

Although suicide rates have traditionally been highest among elderly males, the current impact of suicide on society shows its increasing frequency among our youth. Worldwide it is now one of the top five leading causes of death among young people aged 15 to 34. In Canada in 2005, suicide was the second leading cause of death among individuals aged 15 to 34, second only to accidents and unintentional injuries.

We are keenly aware that suicide rates are higher among certain populations, including aboriginal youth and Inuit living in northern Canada. That is why this government is investing in programs that address this important issue, such as the national aboriginal youth suicide prevention strategy.

Too many Canadian families have to deal with the anguish of losing a loved one to suicide. There is the social impact of losing a loved one to suicide as well. Suicide and suicide attempts have significant impacts on individuals, families and all of our communities. We can also see some similarities between mental health and suicide, as many of the risk and protective factors of suicide are the same as the problems and illnesses associated with mental health. Both have stigma attached to them that tend to curb open discussions and prevention efforts.

Suicide is caused by a number of medical and social factors including mental disorders, family violence and social isolation. These factors increase the likelihood of poor mental health which in turn can lead to suicidal behaviour. Because suicide has many faces and can impact society in a variety of ways, its prevention must involve all sectors including governments, non-government organizations, academia and the private sector.



There are many levels of government that work in various ways with suicide prevention. Several federal organizations including Health Canada, the Public Health Agency of Canada, the Canadian Institutes of Health Research, Veterans Affairs, Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development, and the Canadian Forces are working to address suicide and mental health issues.

In the delivery of health care in their own jurisdictions provinces and territories are also tailoring programs and services that respond to the needs of their citizens. Collectively we need to promote positive mental health, intervene early and prevent risk factors for mental health problems which often lead to suicide and suicide attempts.

I am very proud that this government is taking leadership and fostering the partnerships with our multiple stakeholders. For example, in September 2010, the hon. Minister of Health, along with provincial and territorial ministers of health, endorsed the declaration on prevention and promotion. Through this endorsement our governments recognized positive mental health as a foundation for optimal overall health and well-being throughout a person's life. In addition to this agreement, the work of the federal, provincial and territorial Public Health Network places a priority on mental health promotion and mental illness prevention.

● (1045)

One of our government's accomplishments, one of the health sectors that I am particularly proud of, is the establishment of the Mental Health Commission of Canada. Collaborating with governments, academia, business and other organizations to mobilize leadership and action is central to the commission's mandate.

The commission is presently working on a national mental health strategy. This strategy is expected to speak to suicide prevention as part of a comprehensive approach to mental health promotion and mental illness prevention in our country.

The Government of Canada also funds the commission to address the stigma associated with mental illness through their Opening Minds campaign. This initiative is meant to enhance the public's education through the mental health first aid initiative.

Through the mental health first aid strategy is a belief that it is critical to deal with physical emergencies quickly, but it is just as important not to neglect a mental health emergency. Mental health first aid refers to the help provided to a person developing a mental health problem or experiencing a mental health crisis.

For over four years the program has taught Canadians how to respond to mental health emergencies, enabling them to better manage potential or developing mental health problems in themselves, a family member, a friend or a colleague.

To date, well over 42,000 people have been trained across Canada. The program is available to anyone interested in learning mental health first aid, including employees such as human resource managers, teachers, counsellors, transit workers, nurses and police officers.

This initiative does not teach people how to be therapists, but it does teach how to recognize the signs and symptoms of mental

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health problems, provide initial help and guide a person towards appropriate professional help.

A basic instructor course is also offered, designed to equip those who want to train others in mental health first aid. An instructor course is specifically designed for people who work directly with our youth. Originating in Australia, the program has 505 instructors across Canada and is now available in 17 countries.

I am pleased to have the opportunity today to recognize some of the important and significant programs and activities in the country that are making a real difference in the lives of Canadians. Notably, several provinces and territorial governments, such as Nunavut, British Columbia, Alberta and New Brunswick, have established strategies to promote mental health and prevent mental illness and suicide.

The Nunavut suicide prevention strategy outlines plans and a common direction for the suicide prevention efforts of communities, organizations and governments in Nunavut. Demonstrating the need for and the value of working together, the strategy is a result of a partnership between the Government of Nunavut and Nunavut Tunngavik Inc., the Embrace Life Council and the Royal Canadian Mounted Police.

Another important example is New Brunswick's provincial suicide prevention program. Connecting to Life is a strategy that coordinates suicide prevention activities and intervention services in the province. Community action, continuous education and inter-agency collaboration are central goals of this program.

The Alberta suicide prevention strategy is a 10-year plan that includes actions targeted both at the general populations and at identified priority groups.

In British Columbia, suicide prevention forms a key part of the province's 10-year plan to address mental health and substance abuse.

The government also recognizes, in addition to the provincial and territorial initiatives, the important contribution made by civil organizations such as the Centre for Suicide Prevention. The centre provides resources and training, including workshops and online courses, for professionals, caregivers and community members.

As well, the Canadian Association for Suicide Prevention plays a role in facilitating information sharing, advocating for policy development and supporting excellence in research and in service. The Canadian Association for Suicide Prevention is currently in the middle of its three-day national conference.

A broad array of community organizations also support individuals and families dealing with suicide and mental health problems. Notably, the Canadian Mental Health Association is a national network, with local and provincial branches carrying out public education and providing local support to individuals with mental health problems. Their mandate is to develop a mental health strategy for Canada, and through this the creation of opportunities such that the protective factors are enhanced and the risk factors of suicide are diminished.

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● (1050)

There is a belief that by doing this, good mental health can be fostered and, wherever possible, the onset of mental health problems and illnesses can be prevented, thus reducing the number of suicides.

The Mental Health Commission of Canada works with key stakeholders and partners such as the Canadian Association for Suicide Prevention to address the issue of suicide. The work includes a focus on target populations that have high levels of depression, anxiety, substance abuse and suicide. It also pays particular attention to youth suicide and suicide in the senior population. It works together with families and caregivers in recognition of the impact of suicide on families and communities.

The commission, whose members are currently developing their strategy, aims to reduce the number of suicides by improving suicide prevention training for front-line workers such as teachers, police and family doctors and by reducing mortality rates for people living with mental health problems and illnesses.

Through our government's funding, the Mental Health Commission of Canada has established a knowledge exchange centre to provide all sectors, stakeholders and the public with the information they need to address mental health and the risk factors that lead to mental health problems, such as suicide. It is working with the Canadian Association for Suicide Prevention to enhance its work in areas such as establishing community practices; developing tools and resources for health care professionals, including crisis centre staff; overcoming challenges and barriers; and providing a space where health professionals are able to offer each other support.

The Mental Health Commission of Canada recognizes that suicide is a tragedy that leaves scars on families and communities.

There are many common risk factors. Over 90% of Canadians who die by suicide have experienced mental health problems and illnesses.

At a more fundamental level, our government also collects data on suicide through Statistics Canada. We use it to analyze and share information on mortality and morbidity, including figures on mental health in general.

The government also funds, along with the provinces and territories, the Canadian Institute for Health Information, which produces reports on mental health and suicide-related topics.

Our government, through the Canadian Institutes of Health Research, is pleased to support the work of the McGill Group for Suicide Studies, along with other government-supported research. This leading-edge multidisciplinary team is making a significant contribution to the understanding of suicide and its risk factors.

Suicide is also an issue of global concern, and our government also monitors interesting developments at the international level in order to identify success stories that will further encourage and inspire our Canadian stakeholders at home. One particularly significant example is coming out of Scotland. Choose Life is a program in Scotland that has been implemented in a partnership with national and local bodies. This framework focuses on training and building skills while improving knowledge of good suicide prevention practices. It is similar to the Government of Canada's

federal role in research and knowledge development and its related investments in the Canadian Institutes of Health Research and Statistics Canada.

Our government believes that the promotion of positive mental health and the prevention of health problems and illnesses are critical to suicide prevention. We also recognize the need to continue to share knowledge and information and to work collaboratively to make a difference in the mental health of Canadians and the prevention of suicide.

This is an important dialogue and an important issue, one that touches all of us and one in which we can all play a very important role.

● (1055)

**Hon. Jim Karygiannis (Scarborough—Agincourt, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, I want to thank the parliamentary secretary for expressing the same concerns that we have. I also want to bring to the attention of the House a special individual.

Mental illness and suicide certainly play as important factors in all levels of life. In this House, we are probably among the strongest people, in that we keep very heavy schedules, we go back and forth to our ridings, and there is a lot of demand on our time.

Not too long ago a member of my colleague's caucus, the late Dave Batters, who was elected in Moose Jaw, said that he would not be running for election in 2008. In June 2009, he committed suicide. It also affects us in this House that we also are probably one of the toughest breeds of people in existence.

I wonder if my colleague would, in memory of his caucus colleague, agree with me that we need not only methods and best practices but also cash and a program in order to ensure that we have a national strategy, and that we need to put resources to it in order to prevent suicide in all levels of our society, even among the strongest here in the House of Commons.

● (1100)

**Mr. Colin Carrie:** Madam Speaker, I want to thank my colleague for bringing back the memory of one of our colleagues, Dave Batters, who unfortunately died from suicide a few years back. He was a friend of mine and a friend of all colleagues here in the House. That emphasizes the fact that suicide affects all of us.

As my colleague said, it is important that we as legislators put resources toward this important issue. Today in this debate we are building awareness of this important topic. All of us sitting in the House today are committed to bringing this issue to the forefront.



As I mentioned earlier, I am most proud of the Mental Health Commission. It will be bringing forth a strategy for mental illness in 2012, which will likely address suicide prevention and the things that my colleagues are bringing forward today. All of us are looking forward to that. I am also looking forward to a very good debate today.

[Translation]

**Mr. Claude Patry (Jonquière—Alma, NDP):** Madam Speaker, my background is in the manufacturing sector, where we organized within the union with support workers. Committees followed up on such matters.

As we know, many people taking care of this are volunteers. There are support meetings in offices on the weekend and in the evening, and people are trained, but there are not enough volunteers.

Does the government have a plan to find people to work in this area and follow up with people with mental illness and regarding suicide prevention?

[English]

**Mr. Colin Carrie:** As I said in my speech, Madam Speaker, the government is funding different programs and one of them is training professional front line workers to recognize the problems with mental illness, which includes suicide.

Over 90% of the people who commit suicide have mental illness issues. I cannot remember the exact statistics, but thousands of Canadians are now being trained at the grassroots level to recognize the signs and symptoms. The average everyday Canadian is not going to be trained to volunteer as a therapist, but it is important that they be trained to recognize the signs and symptoms of their colleagues, their friends, and family who are having a hard time or having issues, so that they can be provided with and directed to the proper treatment.

Working with our partners, whether it is through the provinces and territories or whether it is through the grassroots organizations, we will really be able to make a difference. All of us here in the House are willing to do more. It is an important commitment to address.

**Mr. Harold Albrecht (Kitchener—Conestoga, CPC):** Madam Speaker, I want to thank my colleague the parliamentary secretary for outlining many of the positive initiatives that our government has initiated over the past five and a half years.

I also want to thank my colleague, the leader of the Liberal Party, for giving us the opportunity to debate this important issue today. Just the fact that this issue is being discussed is important because for far too long this has been shrouded in secrecy and silence. There is also a stigma attached to it.

Members will know that last week I tabled my private member's Bill C-300, which calls on the government to create a federal framework for suicide prevention.

As our colleagues have pointed out today, the numbers are truly appalling. Over 300 people every month end their lives by suicide, or the equivalent of the number of passengers in one large airliner. We have local stories here in Ottawa. Back in my region of Waterloo last year, in one week, three youths ended their lives by suicide.

### *Business of Supply*

We have good work going on across the country. Little chapters are doing excellent work. What we need is a federal leadership role, not just in terms of looking at risk factors and prevention but also in what we would term "postvention", in terms of caring for those who are left to deal with the aftermath of suicide.

I wonder if my colleague would comment on the importance of having some part of a framework or a strategy, or a government initiative that would deal with those families and communities that are left broken as a result of suicide.

• (1105)

**Mr. Colin Carrie:** Madam Speaker, I want to thank my colleague from Kitchener—Conestoga for all of his good work. He did mention his private member's bill that was proposed last week. He is truly a leader in this important field.

My colleague brought up something that many of us forget. The tragedy of suicide is not only the loss of a life but its affect on family, friends and loved ones left behind. Our government is ensuring that we work in partnership with community organizations. Each community is different in how it can handle and manage the different services that are required. It is an extremely important service to have available to not only console family members and friends but to help them and co-workers left behind deal with such a tragic loss. I thank him for bringing that forward.

[Translation]

**The Deputy Speaker:** The hon. member for Algoma—Manitoulin—Kapusking has time for only a very brief question.

**Mrs. Carol Hughes (Algoma—Manitoulin—Kapusking, NDP):** Madam Speaker, I appreciate being given the time to ask a question, for this is such an important issue.

The suicide rate in aboriginal and Inuit communities is very high, and the federal government is responsible for granting funds to those communities. I know that many suicides have taken place in the communities in my riding. Can the government tell us why these communities practically have to get on their knees and beg for the funds needed to figure out what is best for them?

[English]

**Mr. Colin Carrie:** Madam Speaker, my colleague points out one of the challenges, particularly coming from the north. There is a higher rate of suicide and, as she knows, the minister is actually from the north and is acutely aware of the difficulty, particularly with the different communities trying to manage this horrible situation.

However, I am proud to say that our government recognizes the high rates of suicide, particularly in aboriginal young people. In budget 2010 we invested \$75 million to extend the national aboriginal youth suicide prevention strategy to 2015, which is a \$10 million increase over previous investments. We provided nearly \$15 million in the last year to the Government of Nunavut.

*Business of Supply*

As I said before, we really have to look at the partnership with the provinces and territories, and the grassroots organizations. We also included \$4 million for the national aboriginal youth suicide prevention strategy because we are committed and we are committed to doing more.

**Ms. Libby Davies (Vancouver East, NDP):** Madam Speaker, I will be sharing my time with the member for Beauharnois—Salaberry.

I am very pleased to participate in the debate today on this very important motion. I thank the member for Toronto Centre for bringing forward this motion. New Democrats support this motion wholeheartedly and are glad there is a thoughtful debate taking place in the House of Commons today. We cannot always say that there is thoughtful debate. This is a very important issue and I know many members will contribute to the debate.

I listened very carefully to the comments by the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Health and while I appreciate that he told the House what it is the Government of Canada has been involved in, I feel there was a lack of information. It seems to me that the debate today, particularly for the Government of Canada, is an opportunity for some reflection, not just about what it thinks it is doing but about what is not being done.

I did not hear that in the parliamentary secretary's speech, which was disappointing because today all sides of the House are willing to hear that kind of debate. We want to hear from the government where it thinks it is not doing enough and we want it to ask the House to support a greater effort toward what needs to be done.

Presumably, we are having this debate because there is a great sense by the Government of Canada and all of us that there is a crisis. The member for Toronto Centre made the point that it is not just the government but all parties. We have not done enough on this issue. I wanted to begin my remarks that way because I am hoping that other government members will be more reflective and make part of the debate what the Government of Canada, from its point of view, needs to be doing in a better way.

One thing I would draw attention to are the underlying risk factors. The fact is that many studies have been done on the prevalence of suicide in groups that are at high risk. We have heard some of that in the debate today, such as aboriginal youth in the north in small and remote communities, but there are other demographics and populations that are at risk, like the LGBT community, veterans and seniors. There are many studies being put forward.

It seems to me that we do not pay enough attention to some of the underlying risk factors. The fact is that suicide is preventable if one understands what is taking place, whether it is on a personal level in terms of someone who may be suffering from depression and mental illness or someone who has gone through some sort of trauma and tragic circumstances, but there are also bigger societal, socio-economic and social conditions that are in effect.

We have seen it many times in our country. How many times have we turned to a particular channel on TV and heard the most tragic story of a string of suicides taking place in some small community? Surely, that has to be setting off alarm bells that there social

conditions in this country to do with poverty, isolation, lack of educational opportunities, overcrowding in housing, and a lack of the basic necessities of human dignity in life. Surely, these are assessments and risk factors that we should be looking at.

Another one would be stigma. If one looks at lesbian, gay and bisexual youth, we know they are at a much higher risk for attempting suicide than heterosexual youth, 28% versus 4% according to the Crisis Intervention and Suicide Prevention Centre of British Columbia. These statistics are very alarming.

The motion talks about a strategy and setting up a fund. We have to understand, grapple, and come to terms with some of the underlying risk factors that are operating within our country.

● (1110)

We think of Canada as this incredibly wealthy place, a place of opportunity, a place of incredible resources, great cities, a great environment, and yet we have these very alarming statistics. We have to ask ourselves why it is that we have a society where the gap is widening between people who are doing exceptionally well and people who are being left behind, people who are living in poverty. I hope that in today's debate we can focus attention on some of those issues.

My colleague, the member for Halifax, recently tabled Bill C-297, An Act respecting a National Strategy for Suicide Prevention. It is an excellent bill. The government would be well advised in supporting this motion to look at that bill and to incorporate the ideas that are in the bill. The bill clearly lays out the need to ensure there is access to mental health and substance abuse services and the need to reduce the stigma associated with using mental health and suicide related services.

The bill also talks about the need to establish national guidelines for best practices in suicide prevention and to work with communities to use culture specific knowledge to design appropriate policies and programs. That is a very important element. There is not a one-size-fits-all approach. It is a matter of understanding what is going on in a particular community, whether it be in a geographic sense or in a demographic sense, to understand those cultural specific risk factors and issues that are at play. The bill also talks about the need to coordinate professionals and organizations throughout the country in order to share information and research, and to support our health care professionals and our advocacy groups who work with individuals who are at risk of suicide.

I was on a Via Rail train a couple of days ago and picked up a magazine that was in the pocket in front of me. As I was looking through the magazine I was surprised to see a major feature about suicide. It focused on the risk of suicide as it affects students, particularly those who are in an environment where the stress of academic excellence produces an enormous amount of anxiety and possibly depression. This particular article focused on the number of deaths by suicide that had taken place at Queen's University. That is where I happened to be going to speak at a human rights conference.



I thought it was quite remarkable that in a *Via Rail* magazine there was a major article about suicide, particularly focusing on a population in our society that we often think is doing alright. They are the students who are motivated, who have all kinds of self-esteem, who are doing really well; they are the elite, the future of our society. It was quite shocking to read the stories of what had unfolded at just one post-secondary educational facility. It was quite shocking to read of the trauma and the impact of the tragedy, and the number of deaths that had taken place in the life of that particular university. I do not mean to single out Queen's because I know this happens elsewhere as well, but it just happened to be the focus of that article. It was truly shocking.

This brings to the attention of all of us that the issue of suicide as it relates to mental health and well-being is very prevalent. The statistics that we see, that 10 people every day commit suicide, are very alarming and shocking.

For those of us in the official opposition, the NDP members, we see this issue as a national priority. We are very happy that the member for Halifax has introduced a private member's bill. It is a very comprehensive bill that gives us the framework for what we need to do to bring forward a national strategy.

I am going to end by coming back to the Government of Canada. Let today be a day where we all participate in this debate and rather than only describe the problem, let us focus on what needs to be done.

• (1115)

Let the government members think about what they are not doing, what they have not been addressing. Why is it that so many aboriginal communities are living in third world conditions? Why is the suicide rate so high in small northern communities? Why is this an issue that affects our youth and the LGBT community? These are the things that we need to talk about in order to come up with an adequate national strategy.

**Hon. Jim Karygiannis (Scarborough—Agincourt, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, we talk about people who commit suicide, people who are distraught and are way down at the bottom of the barrel, one could say.

However, there is something we should have at the back of our minds. We should be thinking about addressing the issue of people who commit suicide involuntarily or who are not cognizant that they are doing it. There are people who go out and drink and then compound their need to get high by taking drugs. Some of those people, through those means, commit suicide unknowingly, not wanting to do that.

Would the member also address the fact that a lot of people overdose, that people drink and take prescribed pills? Should we also, through the strategy that we are talking about creating here today, make sure that we address that particular issue?

**Ms. Libby Davies:** Madam Speaker, I think my hon. colleague is entirely correct. There are broader and bigger issues related to suicide.

I am very involved in my community where people are facing addictions, often because of trauma, often as an issue of self-

medication, often as a result of being homeless and on the street, or having come through residential schools.

This is the point. We see these communities that are incredibly high risk for a number of factors. It may well be that somebody makes a decision to end his or her life. It may be a situation where the person's lifestyle and the behaviours the person engages in are leading him or her to a very early death, which again is preventable.

We have to ask ourselves not only what we can do as individuals but also what kind of strategy we can put in place to address the underlying issues and risk factors that are preventable. If we provided the resources for housing, education, and proper counselling and follow-up, I think the number of deaths would decrease.

• (1120)

**Mr. Harold Albrecht (Kitchener—Conestoga, CPC):** Madam Speaker, that we are having this conversation in a national forum like this is so important. It is important that we end the silence around this topic.

I want to commend a previous questioner who commented about my colleague, Dave Batters. I also want to take this opportunity to thank Denise Batters for her amazing work and for not being afraid to share her story and bring it into the public forum. As members know, my colleague Dave Batters was very open about his battle with depression. For many of us it was a total shock to hear that he had ended his life by suicide. He was always such an encouragement and a great person to be around.

I think my colleague will agree that not all suicides are the result of mental illness. There is, as is pointed in the motion, a public health issue as well.

Would my colleague highlight what her understanding is of the need for a public health part of this, in addition to the mental health part?

**Ms. Libby Davies:** Madam Speaker, I am glad that the motion was framed as a public health issue as well. That allows us to examine the broader aspects in terms of awareness and stigma, and the education that needs to take place.

What a familiar and sad story that when people learn of someone who has taken his or her own life they often say that they did not realize what was going on.

I think there is an element of broader public understanding, in the sense of the family or within the school system, and for all of us, whether we are colleagues here in the House or whether it is in our local communities. This is such an important element because, unfortunately, there is still a stigma associated with mental illness and depression.

Again, I think this is why today it is really important that we urge the Mental Health Commission of Canada and the Government of Canada to focus on a specific strategy that deals with suicide prevention.

*Business of Supply*

[Translation]

**Ms. Anne Minh-Thu Quach (Beauharnois—Salaberry, NDP):** Madam Speaker, I would like to thank my hon. colleague from Vancouver East for sharing her time with me. I would also like to say that the NDP will be supporting the Liberal motion regarding a national suicide prevention strategy, since this is a very urgent problem that needs to be addressed.

A national prevention strategy is essential, because it will save lives. To achieve that, however, we need to work together and provide the assistance that people who are suffering need. To ensure that all communities in Canada receive the care and attention they need, we must take a coordinated approach. Over the past 20 years, our society has become more aware of the complex issue of suicide. We now know that at-risk people usually feel isolated and are often suffering terribly. We also know more about the medical, social and economic causes of suicide.

In the 1980s and 1990s, some programs started up in various provinces and they have produced tangible results. Since 1998, Quebec has had a provincial suicide prevention strategy with specific funding. The help centres work together and form a provincial network. There is also a provincial emergency help line and a hotline devoted exclusively to young people, called Kids Help Phone. We now have suicide prevention training for health professionals and the provincial government is funding research in this field. Youth centres, the CLSCs, NGOs and other partners are now working together to offer people at risk the necessary help and aftercare.

Before adopting this strategy, the suicide rate in Quebec was one of the highest in the industrialized world. The suicide rate dropped from 18% in 1981 to 14% in 2009. That is a clear improvement, but much more progress remains to be achieved. The data show that an effective strategy, involving all the players, can be fruitful.

Unfortunately, a number of our country's isolated communities still do not have access to these programs. That is why it is important to focus on local and provincial initiatives and come up with a national strategy to ensure that no one is forgotten. Although suicide is an individual action, it has to be viewed as a public health issue. Quality of life, one's social network and the help available can have a positive impact on a person in distress, if those resources are accessible, of course.

Without help, people in distress are isolated and left alone with their suicidal thoughts. There is a great risk that the person will go through with it. Family violence and drug and alcohol use can aggravate the state of the person in distress. Things such as trouble finding a place to live, a broken heart, failure, rejection, financial problems or any other stressful event that causes anxiety or sadness can trigger suicidal ideas. That is when the straw breaks the camel's back.

The incidence of suicide is higher in some groups. People with mental health problems, the homeless, seniors or youth, for example, are at higher risk. In the case of the homeless, their distress is aggravated by their miserable living conditions. These people often cannot access health services because of their precarious social situation and the fact that they do not have an address. Homelessness remains a phenomenon that is not well understood and the homeless

are often treated with disdain. For that reason any initiative to help these people must be applauded.

I would like to point out that, on October 21, outdoor vigils will be held in Salaberry-de-Valleyfield, which is in my riding, and throughout Quebec. The *Nuit des sans-abri* is organized by the organization P.A.C.T. de rue. These events can help us understand what the homeless experience, their distress, and also their needs and rights, which are often overlooked.

Other groups are also considered to be more susceptible to suicidal thoughts, including aboriginal youth. This has been mentioned several times today. The community of Akwesasne, located in my riding, knows all too well what I am speaking about. In the past 18 months, four young people have taken their own lives. For a community of 15,000 people, this loss of human life is a tragedy. The youth of this Mohawk community often struggle with drug and alcohol abuse. Some of them steal prescription drugs, or are recruited by criminal gangs to run drugs to be sold on the black market.

Mental health services are available in the Akwesasne community, but not all young people will accept help. The reserve's leaders point out the importance of providing services that are tailored to the reality of these young people and would like to set up a help line for aboriginal youth, because there is none at present.

● (1125)

In addition, the adolescent treatment centre in Akwesasne, which provides care for young people with addictions, is still waiting for federal government funding so that staff can continue their work with youth. Thus, it is of the utmost importance that these young people receive help that respects their cultural and spiritual identity. In general, these young people are at a higher risk of suicidal ideation. Suicide is the leading cause of death among youth aged 10 to 24. Adolescence is a critical time involving significant changes. It is a time when young people are building their personal identity and self-esteem. They are experiencing peer pressure and feel pressured to succeed in school. They are also sometimes the victims of schoolyard bullying or domestic violence.

Mental health problems often become apparent during adolescence. The role of psychologists, psychoeducators, social workers, street workers, teachers and others is key in identifying the warning signs. These teachers and health professionals must be trained and given the financial support they need to know how to act and react when faced with the distress of these young people.



It is also important to reduce the stigmatization of young people with suicidal thoughts and behaviour. There are still too many taboos, and people do not dare to speak out about their unhappiness. Consulting mental health professionals and identifying themselves as someone who needs help is not an obvious course of action for them because there is still a lot of prejudice in this regard. Nevertheless, we must encourage these young people to talk to the appropriate people. This will show that they are trying to improve their situation and that they want to regain balance in their lives. That is what we must encourage. Help must therefore be available when people need it.

The bill introduced by my colleague from Halifax addresses a number of aspects of suicide, including prevention. The bill would provide for better training of professionals in the field, better media coverage, and support for research to prevent suicide and better identify risk groups. The bill focuses on collaboration with community organizations and stakeholders in the first nations who already have expertise in the area. It encourages the communities, provinces and cities to work together to prevent suicide. The bill also recognizes the importance of changing attitudes, breaking taboos and being able to speak openly about suicide.

Furthermore, for all of these reasons, countries like Australia, the United Kingdom, Sweden, Norway and the United States have all established national strategies. Canada is one of the few industrialized countries that does not yet have such a strategy. But the clock is ticking. Every day, as we have heard many times, 10 people commit suicide in this country. Every year, 3,500 people choose to end their lives. We must take action. A national strategy would allow us to prioritize listening, helping and offering compassion, and to help those who are suffering across the country.

This is a critical issue, and the elected members of this House must stand united and adopt the motion moved by the Liberals.

We have a responsibility to address this problem. We also have the means to help people in distress. Now it is up to the government to show its political will to take positive and concrete action and get involved in developing and implementing this national suicide prevention strategy that is so crucial and so urgent. We can choose to build a more positive and just society. Let us do it.

• (1130)

[English]

**Mr. Harold Albrecht (Kitchener—Conestoga, CPC):** Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for highlighting the dramatic reduction in suicides in Quebec. That is a great story that we need to build upon. She also mentioned a number of the NGOs who are doing good work in regard to suicide prevention.

I recently had the honour of working with a group doing online work in suicide prevention called Your Life Counts, which young people can access on the Internet. I mentioned Dave Batters in my previous remarks. His wife, Denise, has done a lot of good work on this. People can search Dave Batters on YouTube to find a 30 second clip that will help us increase awareness as it relates to suicide prevention. I would encourage my colleagues and those who may be watching to take advantage of that.

### *Business of Supply*

What role does the member think it is important for new technology to play? It is important from my perspective to get beyond the pamphlets and the round tables, although they are good, and start to embrace some of the modern technology that is at our fingertips to reach people instantly, especially those in our northern and remote communities where they may have access to those kinds of resources but not to the traditional resources that we are used to here.

[Translation]

**Ms. Anne Minh-Thu Quach:** Madam Speaker, I would like to thank the hon. member across the way for his question.

That is a very appropriate proposal given how youth embrace new technologies and how accessible they are.

However, we cannot forget that this is a human issue and we need to have support workers who can provide youth with tools as well as offer help and active listening. We also cannot forget that networks do not always reach the regions. High-speed Internet is not currently available throughout the country, particularly in the regions.

These issues need to be dealt with and support workers need to be on site so that they can speak face-to-face with and provide friendly help to these people who are already so isolated.

We must not accentuate the isolation felt by the youth facing these issues, although virtual help is another option. These measures need to be accessible to youth.

• (1135)

**Mr. Denis Blanchette (Louis-Hébert, NDP):** Madam Speaker, I would like to thank the hon. member for her speech because she expanded on the issue by also mentioning seniors and the homeless. I think she was the first to mention these groups. It is important to recognize that this is an overall problem. Yes, some groups suffer more than others, but it affects everyone, and that is important to note. I want to thank her for bringing it up.

Many people are affected by this. We often talk about mental health but sometimes it is just a moment of weakness in a person's life story. And it leads some to commit the irreparable.

Can my colleague tell me how she sees the federal government's involvement in this partnership—because I have difficulty talking about leadership—with the provinces and stakeholders to help tackle the problem?

**The Deputy Speaker:** The hon. member for Beauharnois—Salaberry has only one minute left.

**Ms. Anne Minh-Thu Quach:** Madam Speaker, I thank my hon. colleague for the question.

Indeed, the federal government could invest in implementation measures, in treatment programs and in giving a little more power to the people who are already working on the ground, but do not have enough funding.

*Business of Supply*

There are not enough school psychologists. There are not enough street outreach workers to help homeless people who need help often, see no solution to their problems and simply need a little one-time assistance to rebuild their hope and courage and regain control of their lives. We need to recognize the important work being done by these people through financial assistance or prevention programs that provide more measures and more practical solutions.

[English]

**Hon. Hedy Fry (Vancouver Centre, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, I will be sharing my time with the member for Etobicoke North.

The motion today frames the issue of suicide as more than a personal tragedy but as a serious public health issue. That, perhaps, is what we want to talk about. I do not think anyone in this Parliament today would say that suicide is not important. I do not think anyone would say that this is not a real issue that we should all care about. I think we all do.

What we are trying to talk about is that this is something that requires the same kind of initiative that was undertaken when we looked at the Canadian partnership against cancer, which was to encourage, fund and support coordination of cancer care in Canada.

Cancer is a physical disease but perhaps the federal government could bring about a supporting and coordinating structure. Given that suicide crosses every age group, ethnic group, gender and socioeconomic lines, it is a number one issue. When we know that it is the third leading cause of death for adult males in Canada, we need to look upon this as an urgent and a serious public health problem that requires this kind of federal leadership to bring it together.

The thing about suicide is that it has been hidden in the shadows for far too long. Everyone is afraid to talk about suicide. The reason is that people believe that if we talk about it, it will encourage others to commit suicide. Everyone talks about the contagion of suicide, the copycat of suicide, but we well know that when we talk about it and discuss the suicidal ideation, the idea, the thought of suicide crossed one's mind at some point in time is not unusual.

In fact, 42% of adults say that the thought of suicide has crossed their mind within the last five days. We know this is something we think about. However, what are the multiple causes that come to bear on this issue that we need to look at and pull together?

Many provinces have anti-suicide strategies and some do not. The point is that this whole issue has been fragmented across the country. It depends on what weight certain provinces put on it, but if we can deal with cancer as a physical ailment, look at a pan-Canadian strategy for cancer and fund it federally, then we need to be able to talk about the fact that suicide needs to be treated in the same manner.

As a physician, it saddens me that I do not know enough about suicide. I have had patients who have committed suicide and patients who have attempted suicide. I sometimes felt powerless because I was not able to see the early warning signs and symptoms that I should have been able to recognize. We know that many people who are successful in committing suicide or who have attempted suicide are often people who, on the surface, seem to be successful and bubbly, people we would never think of.

We need to do a lot of work on this issue. With a pan-Canadian strategy, we could look at the issue of research. There are so many factors that lead to the issue of suicide.

The Canadian Institutes of Health Research is doing some work on this and it says that there may be some genetic factors. It may very well be that we need to look at this from a genome point of view. There may be some genetic components here.

Sometimes there may be an underlying mental illness or an underlying disability, whether it is a mental disability or not, where people feel that they cannot be normal. They do not well at school. Maybe they have dyslexia or a learning disability. They are afraid. They do not want to speak about it. They go through life feeling unnatural and abnormal.

The high rates, five times the normal rate of suicide in Canada, are among aboriginal youth and seven times more among Inuit youth. We see it five times more among people within the LGBT community, especially youth in the LGBT community.

● (1140)

We know that one part of the issue of suicide is the psychological component. It is the concept that if one is different, one must be ashamed of the difference. Sometimes it is the hopelessness of it all combined with bullying. We know that 350,000 episodes of bullying occur every month in this country, and some of it can lead to suicide.

We know that suicide is impulsive. We know, for instance, that somebody may be thinking about suicide for the biological, social or psychological reasons that cause suicide attempts to occur, but sometimes it is impulsive. Seventy per cent of Canadians who had thought about or attempted suicide say that they attempted suicide an hour after a trigger pushed them over the limit. Some 25% have said that within five minutes after a trigger pushed them over the limit, they actually attempted suicide.

I think the problem is that we do not see mental illness as a real problem. Unless it is a psychosis like schizophrenia or bipolar disorder, there is a tendency to think that mental illness is an issue of personal will. It is a pejorative thing that one cannot cope or that it is psychological. The term "psychological" alone is pejorative. It means that a person is less capable of coping, and we know that is not true.

As I said before, we know there are biological, social and psychological factors. If we someone came to us, perhaps a friend, and said that when they ran or when something happened, they got a left-sided chest pain, we would tell them to go and see a doctor because it might be a sign of heart disease. However, when someone tells us that they are incapable of coping or when we see that they suffer from a mental problems or psychological issues, we think it is something to ignore and that those people have less will power than we do or are less able to cope with their problems. However, we know that this is not true.



If a person went to emergency as an attempted suicide, triage would cause them to be seen immediately, just as with a chest pain. The difference is that if the person with a chest pain had a cardiogram that showed an early sign of an infarction in the heart muscle, that person would be immediately admitted. They would be given a bed and follow-up. The follow-up would continue, and the person would have multiple tests.

However, a person who goes into hospital for attempted suicide is taken care of only in the sense that their stomach is pumped or whatever is needed to keep them alive is done, but there are no treatment beds, or very few. There is no place to send them. There are no referrals. We do not have enough health care professionals. Psychologists are not covered under the Canada Health Act, yet they are an essential part of this issue.

When we look at the problem of suicide, we need to look at how to link all these pieces to fit together. That is why we need federal leadership: to pull the pieces together.

For instance, we need to look at the education and training of the people who are the first line. In cases of youth suicide, we need to look at who a young person could meet, such as the school coach or school counsellor. Many are not trained to recognize the early signs and symptoms of suicide.

However, we know that if someone in a school commits suicide, it is important in terms of prevention to take action to deal with the bereavement process immediately and to talk about it. A professional is needed to talk with the young people in school to prevent those who are at high risk from committing suicide because of what happened to a class member or a friend of theirs. We know there is a high risk of that, not because these people are less capable or less able to deal with the trauma, but because we know there are some people who, for biological, sociological and other reasons, may be more at risk and feel that is the way to go.

These are the things we need to talk about. We need to talk about developing counselling in schools and developing an ability to deal with this in schools, as well as how we train family practitioners and public health nurses to recognize the early signs and symptoms.

For instance, today we had Mrs. Richardson talking about her daughter's suicide a year ago. This is a prime example.

• (1145)

Here was a bright, brilliant athlete, a girl who did well in school and seemed bubbly on the surface. What her mother said today in the press conference was really telling. She said, "I want us to talk about suicide every day in our homes, at the dinner table, in the malls, everywhere". What I—

**The Deputy Speaker:** Order, please. The hon. member may elaborate in questions and comments. Her time has elapsed.

Questions and comments, the hon. member for Kitchener—Conestoga.

**Mr. Harold Albrecht (Kitchener—Conestoga, CPC):** Madam Speaker, Margaret Somerville, an ethicist at McGill University, has said, "Hope is the oxygen of the human spirit; without it our spirit dies..." That encapsulates, in a very real sense, the despair that those who may consider ending their lives by suicide might be facing.

### *Business of Supply*

My colleague mentioned the importance of dealing with the social, biological and psychological factors as we deal with suicide prevention, and I agree with her 100%. I am wondering if she would agree that we could add a spiritual dimension. For many in this room and in aboriginal communities, there is a spiritual dimension to providing hope that far too often we neglect.

I am wondering if she would comment on her perception as it relates to the need to recognize the spiritual dimension for those who may be facing this despair in their lives.

**Hon. Hedy Fry:** Madam Speaker, that is a very important question. Some suicide prevention strategies have to be specific, but they also have to be culturally sensitive and sensitive to spiritual and religious ideation. They have to be able to deal with the various cultural, religious and spiritual areas that inform how we deal with things, see the world and feel we fit into the world. That is very important.

[Translation]

**Mrs. Sana Hassainia (Verchères—Les Patriotes, NDP):** Madam Speaker, I would like to begin by congratulating my hon. colleague on her speech.

As we know, the United Nations and the World Health Organization recognize suicide as a serious public health problem and a priority issue. Many industrialized countries, including Australia and the United States, have national strategies that have proven effective. Canada does not have a national strategy. A commission was established in 2007, the the Mental Health Commission of Canada.

Does my hon. colleague believe that this commission is enough to ensure adequate suicide prevention? Can this commission take the place of a national strategy?

• (1150)

[English]

**Hon. Hedy Fry:** Madam Speaker, it is interesting that 30 years ago Canada was a world leader and had the expertise on this issue. We in Canada—not a province, but Canada—held the very first symposia on this issue. The world listened, and 30 years ago countries of the world, such as the United Kingdom, Australia and Germany, picked up this Canadian movement and moved on it. We never did.

As the hon. member for Toronto Centre said earlier today, this is not a blame on anybody. Different political parties formed government, and all tended not to deal with it, I think for the simple reason that we do not see mental illness being as important as physical illness. Mental illness is still not seen as a medically necessary service. We still do not see it that way.

Until we recognize mental illness as part of the continuum of health that is physical, mental, social, psychological and other things, we will not understand that we need to do something about it and we will not follow the extremely good example that we started 30 years ago, after which different levels of government let the ball drop. That is the sadness of the whole thing.

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It does not mean we should continue. We should start doing something now. We have the expertise and are in fact able to do this very well.

**Hon. Geoff Regan (Halifax West, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, my hon. colleague noted that psychologists are not paid for under the Canada Health Act, yet psychiatrists are. That does not make much sense, because psychologists would be less expensive. I want to ask the member about that and also about the research into genetic links that has been done in this area.

**Hon. Hedy Fry:** Madam Speaker, the hon. member touched on the important thing, which is that we cannot continue to see suicide as only a psychological issue. We know that there are biological issues. The Canadian Institutes of Health Research are telling us that there may be epigenetic links. We know, for instance, that in families in which someone has committed suicide, there is a five to eight times greater risk of suicide occurring among the children of the parent who committed suicide. We know that is true.

However, it is important to note that psychologists are not considered health providers or paid for under our public health care system because we do not see suicide as an illness, and we need to start looking upon it as a real physical illness.

**Ms. Kirsty Duncan (Etobicoke North, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, I rise today in order to remember family and friends lost to suicide, to provide support to those who have experienced loss, and to remind those suffering that there is hope and there is caring and compassion in community.

I also rise to call on the government to develop a national suicide prevention strategy. Our children, parents and family members, our friends and colleagues, our clients and patients, our neighbours and people from all socio-economic, age, culture and gender groups cannot wait any longer.

Worldwide, almost one million people die from suicide annually. The global mortality rate is 16 per 100,000, meaning that there is one suicide death roughly every 40 seconds and that 3,000 people commit suicide daily. For every person who completes a suicide, 20 or more may attempt to end their lives. In the last 45 years, suicide rates have increased by 60% globally.

No part of Canadian society is immune. Suicide affects all of us and remains among Canada's most serious public health issues, with a mortality rate of 15 per 100,000. In the past three decades, more than 100,000 Canadians have died by suicide. Every year in Canada, almost 4,000 people die by suicide.

Rates are even higher among specific groups. For example, the suicide rate for Inuit peoples living in northern Canada is between 60 and 75 per 100,000 people. Suicide rates for Inuit youth are staggeringly high, as much as 28 times the national average in the case of males aged 15 to 24. Other populations at an increased risk of suicide include youth, the elderly, inmates in correctional facilities, people with mental illness, and those who have previously attempted suicide.

Tragically, when someone dies by suicide, the pain does not end. It is merely transferred to family, friends and community. Those grieving require compassion, support and understanding to help minimize suicide's impact.

For far too long discussion of suicide involved secrecy, stigma and taboo. The secrecy must stop. We must confront the silence, stand up to stigma, and actively work to prevent suicide.

Suicide is a complex problem involving biological, psychological, social and spiritual factors. Specific risk factors include mental disorders such as alcohol dependence, depression, personality disorders and schizophrenia, and physical illnesses such as cancer, HIV infection and neurological disorders.

We know that those at risk for suicide experience overwhelming emotional pain. They want and need help in reducing the pain so that they can go on to lead fulfilling lives. We must ensure that they get the help they need.

Let me raise the plight of many of our veterans, who are struggling when they come home, living with post-traumatic stress disorder and in some cases fighting for their lives.

Before I do, let me thank all our veterans, our World War II veterans and our Korean veterans, our Canadian Forces veterans and all our Canadian Forces in reserves. I thank them; I know each member of this House thanks them, and our country thanks them. There is no commemoration, praise or tribute that can truly match the enormity of their service and their sacrifice.

Veterans Affairs reports that the number of veterans experiencing some kind of operational stress injury, such as PTSD, has tripled in the past five years. According to data obtained through access to information requests, the suicide rate among Canada's soldiers may have doubled from 2006 to 2007, rising to a rate triple that of the general population.

I have had the enormous privilege of working with veterans across our country and I have heard their stories. Examples are a veteran living for 10 years in the bush; my receiving a suicide note from a veteran on a Sunday afternoon; having to find help and having to find the veteran lost in a snowstorm, because no psychiatrist appointment was coming for three months, despite a diagnosis of PTSD for years and years; not hearing from a veteran for weeks and waiting for him to re-emerge from the darkness of his basement; receiving a note from a veteran distraught because a young friend was found dead on the roadside and another dead in the basement. Both had simply stopped living. They had given up eating and taking their medication.



• (1155)

Here are just a few comments from our country's extraordinary heroes and their desperation: "We are all suffering and we need help. It is not only the guys we lose overseas; it is the guys we lose here to suicide. They may as well have died overseas. We have all contemplated it. The thoughts are relentless. When I contemplate suicide, it is relief. It means stopping the pain, no more fights with that. The question we ask ourselves is how can we leave and leave our family in a better position. Everyone else is better without us".

From a physician who veterans call a guardian angel: "What we really need in place for these vets, we need to be able to refer them somewhere nearby where they can have continuous care. They are hurting and their families are hurting. Many wives have contacted me and really do not want to stay with them. They are afraid of them and for them".

It is time we give unprecedented support to our wounded warriors especially those with PTSD and traumatic brain injury which has led too many of our veterans to taking their own lives. We must continue to make major investments, ending the stigmatization of PTSD and traumatic brain injury, improving outreach and suicide prevention, hiring and training more mental health councillors and treating more veterans than ever before. Every veteran needs to be assured that his or her nation will be there to help them stay strong. It is the morally right thing to do.

There are effective strategies and interventions for the prevention of suicide. For example, adequate prevention and treatment of alcohol, depression and substance abuse; restriction of access to common methods of suicide such as firearms or toxic substances like pesticides; and follow-up contact with those who have attempted suicide. However, there is a tremendous need to adopt multi-sectoral approaches including both health and non-health sectors; for example, education, justice, labour, police, politics and the media.

Many countries have developed national strategies to reduce suicide often with the expertise and leadership of Canadian experts. We must all ask why Canada has been so slow in moving forward on this pressing public health issue, so such delay never happens again.

Canada needs a national suicide prevention strategy, an ongoing co-ordinated set of activities which will aim to reduce suicide by a specific amount by a given period. The strategy should be evidence-based, specific and subject to evaluation. Specific goals might include: the reduction of risk in key high risk groups, the promotion of mental well-being in the wider population, the reduction of the availability and lethality of suicide methods, the improvement of reporting of suicidal behaviour in the media, the promotion of research on suicide and suicide prevention, and the improvement of monitoring.

In closing, each suicide is an individual tragedy and the irrevocable loss to society. Suicide is devastating for families and other survivors; economically, psychologically and spiritually. For these reasons the government must make suicide prevention a health priority. No veteran should ever have to utter these words again: "I am a second generation serviceman. My son will never put on a uniform. I'm losing sleep. MPs should be losing sleep. PTSD has

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destroyed everything in my life. Dying hangs over me every day of my life".

We as Canadians must end the silence, ease the suffering, and prevent others from experiencing such devastating loss.

• (1200)

**Mr. Colin Carrie (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Health, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, my colleague talked about youth suicide in aboriginal communities and that is something very close to my heart and the minister's heart. I want her to know that the government shares her concerns.

For example, the national aboriginal youth suicide prevention strategy provides first nations in Inuit communities with access to services which address specific risk factors and protective factors. In other words, they get access to crisis intervention and post-intervention services. Overall, the strategy promotes culturally safe activities. Through this strategy we are partnering with different communities to ensure that we are working with them in ways that they find effective.

Would my colleague clarify what additional action she feels would be required in addition to all that is currently being done by the federal government and the communities?

**Ms. Kirsty Duncan:** Mr. Speaker, the reality is that they are still dying, and the numbers are among the highest in the world. We need to continue to take action.

I would like to tell the House a bit more about the veterans I have served, and I would like to use their words: "I used to be a productive serviceman, now I'm over 100% disabled. I'm talking for the first time so other veterans don't have to go through what I have. All I think about is suicide. I spend more minutes of every hour thinking about suicide. The military's depart with dignity program is more like coffee hour. I wanted an honourable ending. I have panic attacks, I'm scared of people, places. I can't stand to be around family. I have suicidal tendencies. The stress of going to the doctors went on and on, and is still on-going. I couldn't think about anything but suicide. I couldn't stop crying. I was mad, I was in pain, mad I was alive, mad there was red tape".

• (1205)

**Hon. Hedy Fry (Vancouver Centre, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, my hon. colleague is aware of this already, but I just want to highlight certain statistics with regard to veterans. In the last five years the number of veteran suicides has increased three times. More veterans in the last five years have committed suicide than actually died in the theatre of war. This is a serious statistic. It tells us that many veterans come back with what is known as post-traumatic stress disorder.

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Could the hon. member tell me what she thinks should be done? Does she believe that there is currently any sort of comprehensive program that is easily accessible to veterans to deal with this issue?

**Ms. Kirsty Duncan:** Mr. Speaker, I would like to quote a physician who has treated veterans with PTSD: “I see two types of suicide, outward and another. They don't care. They are chronically helpless, hopeless. They don't take their meds. They stop eating. It is harder to recognize. I had one case...he died of a very serious infection. His wife had to go away, and he just died in his chair”.

Physicians have made the following recommendations. They would like a federal public inquiry. They would like to see an independent oversight body with real power of enforcement and sanction, awareness and education regarding suicide. They feel that no individuals should be released unless they are in the shape they were in when they signed up. They would also like to see a buddy system to check on those suffering with PTSD and back-up psychiatrists.

**Mr. Patrick Brown (Barrie, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I will be splitting my time with the extraordinary member of Parliament for Brandon—Souris.

Suicide is a tragic event that affects far too many Canadian families. Suicide is one of the leading causes of death worldwide. Each year, several thousand Canadians lose their lives to suicide. The World Health Organization estimates that in Canada the rate of suicide is 15 for every 100,000 people. While suicide rates vary by age, gender and ethnicity in Canada, males appear to be more at risk.

Furthermore, suicide is the second leading cause of death among youth aged 10 to 24, according to the Canadian Psychiatric Association.

Certainly, some of the tragedies in the National Hockey League this summer of some of its alumni highlighted how prevalent this problem is, how prevalent this challenge is.

If there is one silver lining out of these enormous tragedies, it is that it will raise awareness to the critical need to look at mental health.

Our health minister, who is from the north, understands first-hand how very real and tragic this issue is in both first nation and Inuit communities. The suicide rate among first nation youth is approximately five to seven times higher in Canada than for non-aboriginal youth. In Inuit regions, suicide is 11 times the Canadian rate.

While there are many contributing factors to suicide, mental illness is a major one. According to the Canadian Mental Health Association, nearly six million, or one in five Canadians, are likely to experience a mental illness over the course of their lifetime. This is why our government has taken some concrete steps to improve the mental health and well-being of Canadians. We take mental health issues seriously. We would like to recognize two important events related to mental illness that will take place this month. In Canada, this is Mental Illness Awareness Week. October 10 is World Mental Health Day. These events provide opportunities to raise awareness of mental illness and the importance of good mental health.

Studies indicate that more than 90% of suicide victims suffer from a mental illness or substance abuse problem. In addition, many of the same risk and protective factors that have an impact on mental illness can influence the risk of suicide. A recent study by the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health found that mental illness is associated with more lost work days than any other chronic condition, costing the Canadian economy \$51 billion annually in lost productivity.

Mental health and well-being contribute to our quality of life. Good mental health is associated with better physical health outcomes, improved educational attainment, increased economic participation, and rich social relationships. Recognizing the importance that good mental health plays on our everyday lives, in 2007, this government created the Mental Health Commission of Canada as an independent, arm's-length organization. It provides a national focal point for mental illness. This government has invested \$130 million in the commission over 10 years to advance work on mental health issues.

The commission is mandated to lead the development of Canada's first ever national mental health strategy. When released in 2012, the strategy would provide a way for the people of Canada, the mental health community, and the jurisdictions, to work together to achieve better mental health.

The commission's release, in 2009, of “Toward Recovery and Well Being: A Framework for a Mental Health Strategy for Canada” marked the completion of the first phase in developing the strategy. It set out a vision containing broad goals for transforming mental health systems in Canada. It has become an important reference point for mental health policy and practice across the country.

The Mental Health Commission of Canada is now finalizing the first ever mental health strategy that would translate the vision and goals of this framework into a strategic plan. Elements of suicide prevention are expected to be contained in the strategy. The strategy has been informed by the voices of thousands of people and hundreds of organizations with a wide diversity of points of view and experience. This strategy is expected to make a significant contribution to the mental health community.

Another important initiative the Mental Health Commission of Canada has been mandated to address is the stigma associated with mental health issues. Stigma is a major barrier preventing people from seeking help. Many Canadians living with a mental illness say the stigma they face is often worse than the mental illness itself. Mental illness affects people of all ages, from all walks of life. It can take on many forms, including depression, anxiety and schizophrenia.



• (1210)

The Mental Health Commission of Canada has launched the largest systematic effort to reduce the stigma of mental health in Canadian history, known as Opening Minds. Its goal is to change the attitudes and behaviours of Canadians toward people living with mental health problems. Through this initiative the commission is working with partners across Canada to identify and evaluate existing anti-stigma programs. Efforts to reduce the stigma associated with mental illness are currently focused at health care providers, the media, the workforce, along with children and youth. Opening Minds is serving as a catalyst in mobilizing actions of others to make a real difference in the area of anti-stigma programs.

To ensure that all the information on mental illness is accessible to the public and those in the mental health field, the commission is establishing a knowledge exchange centre. This initiative is creating new ways for Canadians to access information, share knowledge, and exchange ideas about mental health. All Canadians will have access to knowledge, ideas, and best practices related to mental illness. Furthermore, this will enhance the capacity for knowledge exchange throughout the Canadian mental health system.

The government has also taken further action to address the issue of mental health among the homeless. Mental illness and homelessness are increasingly related and there is a need for more research in this area.

Just last week in Barrie I was speaking to a nurse in the community, Nicole Black. She works at the David Busby Street Centre in Barrie. She was telling me how prevalent it is and the challenge that is faced when trying to assist with the battle to combat homelessness. It is great that the government recognizes the importance to work in this area. This is why in 2008 the government provided \$110 million over five years to the Mental Health Commission of Canada to investigate mental illness and homelessness. This includes the At Home/Chez Soi initiative, which is the largest research project of its kind in the world.

The project is happening now in five Canadian cities: Vancouver, Winnipeg, Toronto, Montreal, and Moncton. This research project is centred on the housing first model. This means that once a person is given a place to live, the person can better concentrate on personal issues. The innovative approach of this project has the potential to make Canada a world leader in providing services to people who are homeless and living with a mental illness.

By creating and supporting the Mental Health Commission of Canada, the government has recognized the link between suicide and mental illness and has demonstrated its commitment to help address this serious issue.

In Barrie, when I toured the Canadian Mental Health Association offices on Bradford Street and the mental health area of the Royal Victoria Hospital, where there are some of the best doctors in the region who assist with mental health issues, I certainly heard loud and clear that this is a growing concern for Canadians and that we need to do what we can to contribute as a federal government. I am so proud that our federal government, under the leadership of our finance minister, has made this a priority.

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It is my pleasure to be in the House today to address this very important topic.

• (1215)

[Translation]

**Mr. Denis Blanchette (Louis-Hébert, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the hon. member for his speech.

He spoke at length about the Mental Health Commission and what it is meant to do. The problem with suicide is related to mental health, but it is not always a mental health issue.

I would like my colleague to talk about how the government would be involved, in other words, the concrete measures the government intends to introduce to support a national suicide prevention strategy.

[English]

**Mr. Patrick Brown:** Mr. Speaker, there are many interrelations and correlations between mental health challenges and suicide. It will be no surprise that the Mental Health Commission, which has a budget of \$130 million over 10 years thanks to this government, will obviously consider that as one of the central aspects to look at when it conducts this study.

In terms of what is being done to address suicide, mental illness is a major risk factor for suicide. It is estimated that 90% of all suicide victims have some kind of mental health condition. That is why it is very important to look at them in the overall framework, together. The 90% figure would suggest that to look at mental health and not suicide at the same time would be a disservice.

Obviously the government has made it a focus to invest in mental health by virtue of the Mental Health Commission of Canada and associated monetary investments to establish and support that commission.

I certainly concur with the member that they are interrelated.

**Mr. Merv Tweed (Brandon—Souris, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to speak to this very important motion.

The impacts of suicide are enormous, and the factors that contribute to suicide are complex and far-reaching.

We know that people with mental illness, those with a history of abuse or a family history of suicide are predisposed to committing suicide. For example, Canadians who are diagnosed with depression are at a higher risk. We also know that the risk of suicide can be precipitated by life events, such as important losses, conflicts with the law, or rejection by society. The cumulative effect of these biological, social and economic factors, such as discrimination, family violence and limited economic opportunities, contribute to the risk of poor mental health and, in turn, suicide behaviour.

We have gained a significant amount of knowledge on the factors that influence mental illness and suicide, but we will benefit from a better understanding of the most effective interventions from prevention of risk factors to treatment approaches.

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To best serve Canadians, we need to be innovative and identify more effective clinical, public health and social interventions. Consistent with our federal role, the government is providing the leadership to pursue the development of such knowledge through funding research and supporting the capacity of communities to address in more innovative ways the complexity of the issues associated with suicide.

Our government is making significant investments in research through the Canadian Institutes of Health Research. I am told that since 2006, CIHR has invested over \$234 million in research on mental health and addiction, and over \$20 million on suicide-related research. CIHR supports population health research to enhance mental health and to reduce the burden of related disorders.

This research is leading the way in identifying the relationship between depression and anxiety, and how these mental health problems affect suicide behaviour. CIHR also supports the advancement of health research to improve and promote the health of first nations, Inuit and Métis people. It does this by putting an emphasis on respect for community, research priorities and indigenous knowledge, values and cultures.

Suicide has deeply affected Canada's aboriginal communities and is the leading cause of death for aboriginal youth. Therefore, CIHR has made suicide prevention for aboriginal communities a research focus. CIHR investments include the suicide prevention targeting aboriginal people initiative and the aboriginal community youth resilience network, a community-led research project aimed at preventing youth suicide.

The goal of this research network is to broaden the depth of social science and health expertise in aboriginal communities and facilitate the exchange of experiences between communities addressing the issue of aboriginal youth suicide.

Our government also provides funding to the Mental Health Commission of Canada to advance research and innovation in mental health and suicide prevention. For example, an investment of \$110 million over five years supports the testing of new programs to better address homelessness among people with mental illness. The commission is also developing a knowledge centre to share the evidence and innovation in mental health with stakeholders across the country.

Our government has also invested \$65 million over five years in the national aboriginal youth suicide prevention strategy that promotes protective factors and the reduction of risk factors for aboriginal youth suicide. This initiative also contributes to the development of new knowledge and best practices on suicide prevention. Budget 2010 provided \$75 million to renew this strategy.

The Canadian Task Force on Preventive Health Care funded by our government is researching and developing clinical practice guidelines for primary and preventive care, including screening for depression.

● (1220)

In addition, the Public Health Agency of Canada's best practice portal provides chronic disease prevention and health promotion information for public health professionals. It has identified best practice interventions for mental illness prevention.

The prevention of suicide starts with building positive mental health and resilience in our children and our youth. Our government is therefore investing in the capacity of Canadian communities to develop and implement innovative approaches to help achieve this goal.

Our government has invested \$27 million to support the nine large-scale mental health promotion initiatives in over 50 communities across Canada, including all provinces and territories. These interventions are focused on improving the mental health of children, youth and families. The goal is to implement and test the number of different programs across diverse populations.

These initiatives target those at higher risk of mental health problems and provide community based support to people living in rural, northern and aboriginal communities.

For example, about 30 aboriginal communities will benefit from these programs. They will also generate significant knowledge on the most effective interventions, which in turn can be shared across Canada with other aboriginal communities.

One such initiative is the mental health promotion for aboriginal youth project. It is directed to children age 10 through 14 years and their parents. This project focuses on a culturally specific approach. It strengthens family interactions by teaching parenting skills, social skills and coping mechanisms.

Another important example is our funding to the Arctic health research network. This will help to address the mental health needs of children, youth and families from Nunavut. This program will engage young people between the ages of 13 to 19 to raise awareness of youth mental health in up to seven communities. This will be done with health professionals, decision makers, families and community members.

The Public Health Agency of Canada also funds initiatives to address risk factors for poor mental health and suicide. We know that bullying, relationship violence and substance abuse are problems among our children and youth which can have harmful long-term consequences.

For example, the WITS program will be implemented in several communities in four provinces, including British Columbia, Alberta, Ontario and New Brunswick. The program works with children, families, local police and other partners to combat bullying.

In addition, funding for the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health will introduce a program for reducing violence and building positive relationships among teens in seven school districts, over 40 schools in three provinces and one territory, including Alberta, Saskatchewan, Ontario and the Northwest Territories.



We know that support for vulnerable families is critical to the future of positive mental health and well-being. Therefore, we are investing in another initiative in Manitoba based on a world recognized model for improving positive mental health outcomes in at-risk families.

This program provides home visiting services to families with children from prenatal to five years of age who are living in conditions of risk. The family-centred program emphasizes positive parenting and enhanced parent-child interaction, improved child health development and use of community resources.

In addition, our government's funding for socially and emotionally aware kids program allows it to operate in three provinces. This program is aimed at building resilience, self-esteem and coping skills in children ages five to 12, as protective factors against poor mental health and risk factors for suicide behaviour.

Early results indicate a decrease in behaviour problems, along with a marked improvement in social relations, focused problem solving and greater emotional awareness. These are the very ingredients for healthy and productive young people.

Our government will continue to collaborate with partners across Canada to build new knowledge, share research results and support innovation to effectively address suicide and its devastating impact on families and communities.

• (1225)

**Ms. Kerry-Lynne D. Findlay (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Justice, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, my colleague made an excellent speech on what is a very sad and troubling topic, I am sure we would all agree.

I am aware of a number of the government's initiatives, as my colleague has pointed out, in the area of mental illness treatment funding and suicide prevention.

I am interested to know to what extent he may be aware of outreach to our ethnic communities. For instance, the Chinese Mental Wellness Association of Canada is in my riding. Problems of language and cultural issues also come to bear on these issues.

I am wondering if this outreach is meant for all communities within Canada.

**Mr. Merv Tweed:** Mr. Speaker, I believe that it is and should be. We are all Canadians and we all have a responsibility to provide the services to the communities in need.

I will speak personally to my own communities in the southwest of Manitoba, Brandon—Souris. We have seen a large influx of new Canadians and the challenges that they go through. A lot of it, as was previously mentioned, deals with language, social interaction and customs from other countries that may not be applicable in Canada. It is important that outreach, particularly in the mental health area, is vital for these people to feel comfortable, to learn, to be a part of the system and be a part of Canadiana. I support those very programs.

• (1230)

[Translation]

**Mr. Denis Blanchette (Louis-Hébert, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the hon. member for Brandon—Souris for his presentation. I

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very much appreciated the idea that we have to be innovative in how we look at this problem.

Often an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure. Even though my colleague mentioned a number of government initiatives, they do not really address the entire problem.

For example, we could make it easier for aboriginal people to have access to education. Does my colleague agree that we should be more proactive about addressing the problem and give the communities what they need to flourish, rather than simply deal with the fallout?

[English]

**Mr. Merv Tweed:** Mr. Speaker, it is important and a lot of the initiatives that our government has undertaken has been to identify those needs and to identify the shortcomings in certain communities and, in my humble opinion, it does not just apply to aboriginal communities. Many communities across Canada have shortcomings. I think that by first identifying them, looking at pilot projects and taking the best of what those offer to communities, this could be a Canada-wide initiative in the sense of what we learn from others quite often can apply to ourselves and how we benefit ourselves and our communities.

**Mr. Patrick Brown (Barrie, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his eloquent speech today and for highlighting the focus of mental health.

As I mentioned in a previous comment, one of the things that was raised at the Busby Centre in Barrie, which is a terrific place that helps with homelessness, was the interrelation with homelessness and mental health issues and the need for government to do more. That would be one of the things the Mental Health Commission could address when it looks at the many different facets of mental health.

Does my colleague from Brandon—Souris share those same concerns in Manitoba?

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bruce Stanton):** Before I recognize the hon. member for Brandon—Souris, I ordinarily would only recognize members when they are in their proper seat. I know the member for Barrie was not in the exact spot that he normally speaks from.

The hon. member for Brandon—Souris.

**Mr. Merv Tweed:** Mr. Speaker, I agree completely with what the member for Barrie said. In my community, we have a gentleman by the name of Glen Kruk who manages the mental health issues across southwestern Manitoba. He is an extremely energetic man. Dealing with homelessness, he spearheaded a project in Brandon where we created 63 residential spots. However, he was adamant that many of those spots would be for homeless people and for the mentally ill, and we are accomplishing that. I thank him every time I see him for his sincere work on behalf of mental illness in Canada.

**Mr. Rodger Cuzner (Cape Breton—Canso, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the opportunity to join in today's debate. I will be splitting my time with the member for St. Paul's.

### *Business of Supply*

It will be 11 years next month that I have been in this chamber. I have had the opportunity to join in many important debates in this place but I see none more relevant and more important than the debate we are having here today.

I commend my leader, the member for Toronto Centre, for bringing this motion forward. It is a topic that people want to gloss over, talk around or not get too in depth on because it has such an impact. If anybody engaging in today's debate, whether on the floor of the House of Commons or watching it at home, has not been touched by suicide, whether a family member, a friend or someone close, then that person has lived a blessed life.

We have heard a number of stories and very personal accounts today of having known or having been close to someone who has taken his or her life. It is an emotional and confusing time. We as legislators and lawmakers must do all in our power to ensure that everything that can be done is being done to lessen the numbers and save lives. The purpose of today's debate is just that, and I appreciate the fact that this was brought forward.

Coming up to the Hill this morning, I saw two old friends of mine, one being Francis Leblanc, the former member for Cape Breton Highlands—Canso, and the other being Stephen Hogg. We chatted a bit and they asked me what was on tap for today in the House. I told them about the subject matter of the motion coming forward and it seized both of them. Obviously, Francis understood the importance of it and Stephen, for the most part, choked up. He said that it meant a lot to him because his dad took his life. I asked him if the signs were there and he said that, of course they were and, in retrospect, he could see them in the rear view mirror. He said that it all made sense when his family reached back and followed it up to the final account. They were seized by the anguish and torture that their dad must have felt. They did not understand where he had gotten the unregistered gun that he had used. The planning leading up to the suicide must have been a tumultuous time emotionally and mentally for the man.

There have been accounts shared here today, along with the account that I heard on the way in this morning. My son's young friend took his own life. He came from a strong, supportive family. He was very engaged in sports and was a successful athlete. He was pursuing an education and seemed to have a great number of supportive friends. Then we got the phone call that he had taken his life. When we lose somebody through suicide, it impacts on all of us. It is very easy to stigmatize those who take their own lives and it leaves us sort of reaching for answers.

● (1235)

We are great hockey lovers in Canada. We think that those who take part in our national sport are almost invincible. They are big, physical creatures and we think about them as being pretty tough to play in the National Hockey League. We think they are physically tough, mentally tough, emotionally tough and they need to be to compete at that level. That is the reality.

However, the hockey community was shaken and the country was shaken over the course of the last number of months when we saw three very high-profile professional athletes take their own lives: Derek Boogaard, from Minnesota Wild; Rick Rypien, a former Canuck; and most recently, Wade Belak, a former member of the Toronto Maple Leafs. If anybody followed the careers of those three,

they saw that they did have some common past. The link was made to the fact that they played a very physical role throughout their NHL careers. They were enforcers. They were the guys who dropped the gloves. They were the guys who picked up for their other teammates. If the tempo had to be changed, they were the guys who took that upon themselves. All three of them were very physical and certainly not shy to drop the gloves and become involved. I think Belak had 145 fights in his NHL career.

So, automatically, they sort of linked that together and asked whether the NHL was doing enough to address fighting in hockey. It all became about fighting. However, they missed the whole point in narrowing it down to the commonality of being fighters because, as things played out, we realized that all three suffered from depression.

What about a guy like Belak? I have a piece that Michael Landsberg from *Off the Record* put together in the wake of Belak's death, which I will read later. However, when we saw Belak on television or anything like that, the guy was a big, handsome farm boy with a beautiful wife and two kids. He was loving life, living large and all those things and we have to wonder, why him. However, in the wake of it, we realize that he had a nemesis and that nemesis was depression.

I did not realize my time was going that quickly but I do want to get Mr. Landsberg's comments on record when he talked about depression. He also suffered from depression. He stated:

We can't see depression. We can't biopsy it. Blood tests don't show it. Neither do x-rays. ... Depression is a disease. It's not an issue or a demon, although it may act like one. ... Start accepting depression as a serious and sometimes fatal illness.

I think that was very poignant.

Aaran Sands also wrote about Belak's death. Aaran Sands is a reporter who covered crime stories for a number of years. He talked about the stigma of depression, the stigma of mental illness and the cruel social stigma that comes with mental illness. He said:

Coming forward to seek help for my illness amounted to career and social suicide for me — it's been an extremely painful experience, worse than any nightmare I've ever had.

I hope things eventually change for the better. But until people start to look at mental illness differently, the suicides will continue, not just among suffering sports stars but in all walks of life.

The reason for today's motion, the reason to bring this issue to the fore of the House is to have that open debate on what it is we can do as a nation, what it is the government should be asking itself. Yes, it is taking steps and it is taking measures but is it doing all it can? Is there a better way to deliver services? Is there a better way to share information? What is it we can do? Are we doing the best we can as a nation?

That is the purpose of today's debate and I hope all members in this House see the merit of that, contribute to this debate and support this motion.



• (1240)

**Mr. Brad Butt (Mississauga—Streetsville, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I am quite pleased to hear members speaking in the House today. We are all speaking with one voice about a serious issue, an issue that could involve any Canadian in any walk of life.

The member suggested that there may be some more things that we could do, and there is no question about that. Our government has done quite a bit. I am quite familiar with the excellent work of the Mental Health Commission of Canada, especially the at home project in Toronto, which links housing and mental illness, and the importance of having a safe, decent home, and helping that individual out.

I wonder if the member would like to suggest to the House today any other specific measures that the government could look at that would work to alleviate mental illness, depression and suicide issues in the country? Does he have anything specific that he could share with the government today?

• (1245)

**Mr. Rodger Cuzner:** Mr. Speaker, there have been some positive contributions today. One thing that has evolved is that the Mental Health Commission of Canada has not been given the resources to carry out some of the recommendations it has put forward. It is important that be identified. Perhaps if the government were to take anything away from this debate and this motion today, it would be to put further resources behind the recommendations coming forward.

There are some good things happening. As my colleague has said, there are some good initiatives province to province. Some provinces are doing better than others. It should not matter about the area code of any Canadian. Any Canadian should have access.

I will just close with the comments made by Aaron Sands:

I have attempted suicide a couple times. Only recently did I come to feel lucky and grateful...thanks to the world-class treatment programs at Homewood Health Centre in Guelph and the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health in Toronto.

People are doing great things. This is about having the best practices. It is about ensuring that all Canadians are aware of those best practices and that they have access to them.

[Translation]

**Hon. Carolyn Bennett (St. Paul's, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I am very honoured to speak to today's debate. It is very important that the House urge the government to work cooperatively with the provinces, territories, representative organizations from First Nations, Inuit, and Métis people, and other stakeholders to establish and fund a national suicide prevention strategy, which among other measures would promote a comprehensive and evidence-driven approach to prevent this terrible cause of death.

[English]

Last Wednesday, when our leader suggested this topic, it has put in motion a week of reflection, a week of memories and regrets tumbling back into every one of us who was worried about what we would say today. I said to the leader this morning that there are certain stories that cannot be told because there is no way to get through them.

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The impotence that one feels as a friend, as a family physician is immeasurable. The line of "What could I have done? Did I do all I could?" just kept coming back and reverberating into what we know is largely a preventable occurrence, and "What can we do as a society, a family, as communities to make this preventable tragedy as small as possible?"

I remember having to go to the morgue and open a drawer, and recognize a patient of mine who had jumped off her balcony, previously homeless, when her birth mother came to find her and she felt not worthy.

I remember a CEO of an arts organization who was on her way to the AGM to explain that there was no money and they might have to shut down. She jumped in front of the subway on the way there.

I remember one of my best friends, a prominent lawyer at Blake, Cassels, who I spent the whole summer trying to talk to and keep alive. A prominent lawyer, great job, great relationship, but those sirens that she described were calling her, to see over the other side, and she eventually could not hold back. She hung herself in her basement.

It is often in reaction to depression, to losing a job or losing a relationship or, as we sometimes see, somebody in trouble with the law who is afraid that people will find out. However, it is based on that horrible diagnosis of depression. It is this hopeless, copeless, worthlessness that is really almost 100% of the time quite separate from the facts. To not be able to get over those feelings, and for us as relatives and friends to not be able to unpack it and not be able to deal with the actual changes in the brain, make it impossible for some to get beyond that.

We have seen PTSD in soldiers and we have seen it in our veterans. At health committee we heard from the widow of the RCMP officer who had been told that his depression was over, given back his handgun, and who killed himself that afternoon.

This is no easy task. As the member for Cape Breton—Canso mentioned, it is even in our most revered hockey players. I have a Jordin Tootoo jersey in my office, when he was with the Brandon Wheat Kings. I remember how excited we were that he would be the first Inuit player to play in the NHL.

His brother, Terence, had played pro hockey, and shortly after Jordin was drafted his brother took his own life because he had been arrested for drinking and driving. Even in his final suicide note, it said, "Jor. Go all the way. Take care of the family. You are the man. Ter." Even in that final note, there was hope, in a certain way, that we could not get at and we were not able to do what needed to be done.

Our leader wrote an article in *La Presse*:

• (1250)

[Translation]

Today, 10 Canadians will take their own lives, a per capita rate three times that of the United States', largely due to the staggering number of suicides among aboriginal Canadians.

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[English]

I keep thinking about a presentation I did that was entitled "What Could I have Done". The first slide was a quote from a youth from the Royal Commission of Aboriginal Peoples. He said that he was strung between two cultures and psychologically at home in neither.

It is amazing that the statistics on suicide for our aboriginal people are so high. The statistics on suicide for our Inuit people show that they are 11 times greater than the rest of Canada at risk.

I remember Bill Mussell from the Native Mental Health Association explaining to me the importance of a secure personal cultural identity and how that builds self-esteem and resilience to handle things when bad things happen to good people. For some people, when bad things happen it just takes them down. As Bill Mussell said in his article in CAMH, "There has been some fine work by the RCAP and the senate committee", but he also said:

According to the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples, good health is the outcome of living actively, productively and safely, with reasonable control over the forces affecting everyday life, with the means to nourish body and soul, in harmony with one's neighbours and oneself, and with hope for the future of one's children and one's land—

Colonization brought changes that attacked, undermined and devalued the aboriginal world view, while at the same time drastically altering the conditions of life...Colonization brought negative, extreme and rapid changes to aboriginal life, while denying the validity of the tools traditionally used by First Nations to cope with change.

We have evidence to show what works and what does not. We are calling in the House for a strategy to have the audacity to fund what works and not fund those things that just make us feel better but does nothing to change the outcome.

Michael Chandler's unbelievable work at the University of British Columbia shows that the presence of self government in land claims, community-based education systems, health services, police and fire services, cultural facilities, getting back to ceremonies, women in government and child protection services have an impact on suicide rates. Community by community, those that have been able to get all of those things done have watched their youth suicide rate drop to virtually zero. His paper in *Horizons* concludes:

Taken altogether, this extended program of research strongly supports two major conclusions. First, generic claims about youth suicide rates for the whole of any Aboriginal world are, at best actuarial fictions that obscure critical community-by-community differences in the frequency of such deaths. Second, individual and cultural continuity are strongly linked, such that First Nations communities that succeed in taking steps to preserve their heritage culture, and that work to control their own destinies, are dramatically more successful in insulating their youth against the risks of suicide.

We want a real strategy and that means, what, when and how. We want it based in evidence and we want it funded properly. This means that there has to be an ability to use the research and knowledge, and translate that into effective policies, political will, effective programs and practices. It means ongoing applied research that takes us back to better research that can really identify best practices. We then have to have the nerve to put it in place.

In the health goals for Canada that all the health ministers approved in the fall of 2005, belonging engagement was a very important one, but the government has yet to develop the indicators and targets.

Each and every person should have dignity, a sense of belonging and contribute to supportive families, friendships and diverse communities. We need to continue to learn throughout our lives through formal and informal education, relationships with others and the land. We must participate in and influence the decisions that affect our personal and collective health and well-being. As Nellie Cournoyea said in 1975 in *Speaking Together*: "Paternalism has been a total failure".

We must work together with our aboriginal communities, first nations, Inuit and Métis to develop a real plan that will really address this national tragedy.

● (1255)

[Translation]

**Mr. Denis Blanchette (Louis-Hébert, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for her speech.

We know that other countries have suicide prevention strategies. I would like my colleague to talk about the benefits associated with such strategies. Getting back to Canada, it is not enough to say that we are investing in this or that. I would like my colleague to tell us what we could achieve collectively by adopting a national suicide prevention strategy.

**Hon. Carolyn Bennett:** Mr. Speaker, strategies have already been adopted by other organizations that show the complexity of a true national strategy carried out in partnership with the provinces, the territories and aboriginal organizations.

[English]

However, without a road map or a plan, we go nowhere. These little programs all over the place are interesting, but they have to be measured and they have to be applied in a national strategy.

In both the Canadian Association for Suicide Prevention blueprint in 2004 and then again in 2009, it is very clear that there needs to be strong common purpose, local wisdom and local knowledge to get it done. That is how we approach complex problems. It means there has to be an awareness that suicide is preventable and that the interventions by our first nations, Métis and Inuit people are described by themselves.

We need gun control to remove the lethal approaches to suicide that unfortunately are successful. It is a matter of building a mental health capacity among all of us to recognize the signs and symptoms and to build on the amazing work of Dr. Stan Kutcher at Dalhousie University.

**Mr. Brad Butt (Mississauga—Streetsville, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I listened carefully to the hon. member because she is a physician and she is her party's aboriginal affairs critic.



I am sure she has done some research, and I ask if she could share with the House some best practices that she has seen in the aboriginal community around mental health awareness programs, treatments, or other successful programs.

I have to admit it is not an area of expertise for me; I am learning as I go, certainly on the aboriginal affairs file, so I would be quite interested to hear of any best practices that the member could share with the House.

**Hon. Carolyn Bennett:** Mr. Speaker, I need only to look in my own riding of St. Paul's, where the homeless shelter called Na-Me-Res, which deals with native men's health, is dealing with homelessness, problems of addiction, mental health problems and depression.

What has been the absolute essential ingredient is that they get back in touch with their culture, with their heritage and their attachment to the land, and are able to once again feel that have a secure personal and cultural identity that allows them the self-esteem to live in dignity. It is remarkable. I am very proud of them, because many of the people who have gone on to university and have become social workers were once clients in that organization.

It is the same with the communities that are getting back to their seasonal ceremonies, using their council fire and sweat lodges and coming to understand that the ways that were healing before are very valid now, if not more so.

• (1300)

**Mrs. Kelly Block (Saskatoon—Rosetown—Biggar, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I will be sharing my time with the member for Kildonan—St. Paul.

It is with great compassion that I rise in the House today to acknowledge the many Canadian families who have dealt with the anguish of losing a loved one to suicide. Indeed, I am from one of those families. I lost a brother to suicide 23 years ago.

I want to specifically focus on those in Canada's three northern territories today and to highlight why our government, along with the territories and community groups, is working collaboratively to find better ways to promote mental health among Canadians.

We undertake significant work to improve the health outcomes of aboriginal Canadians, including research through the Institute of Aboriginal People's Health at the Canadian Institutes of Health Research. As well, budget 2010 provided \$285 million over two years to renew aboriginal health programs, including funding for the national aboriginal youth suicide prevention strategy.

It is a sad fact that aboriginal people in Canada's northern communities do not enjoy the same relatively high standard of health and living as do many other Canadians in the south. Health indicators in the territories, particularly in Nunavut, are among the poorest in Canada, and the prevalence of chronic and infectious diseases and mental health problems and suicide is increasing.

Life expectancy for aboriginal people in the territories, especially Inuit, is lower than in the rest of Canada, and infant mortality rates are higher. In addition to these health challenges, many territorial communities are also dealing with socio-economic realities like

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poverty and higher rates of unemployment among their aboriginal population.

Per capita, the number of residential school survivors in the territories is great than anywhere else in Canada, and this legacy has had an immediate and lasting effect on families and individuals that is only now starting to be understood.

It is this young population, the future of Canada's north, that is of particular concern. First nations rates of suicide are 4.3 times the national average, and Inuit regions show a rate of over 11 times higher. Unlike suicide rates for non-aboriginal people, rates of aboriginal suicide are highest among youth. Indeed, injury and suicide are the leading causes of death for aboriginal youth.

Suicide rates in Nunavut for men aged 15 to 24 are 28 times the national average. Our government acknowledges that the high suicide rates in the north, particularly among Inuit youth, are a cause of great concern. That is why our government is taking action on aboriginal youth suicide.

Last year our government tabled a budget that included nearly \$1 billion in investment for aboriginal people. As part of the budget, \$285 million was allocated to aboriginal health programs, including funding to continue the national aboriginal youth suicide prevention strategy until 2015.

To support community-based solutions focused on resilience, embracing and celebrating life, and creating supportive environments, our government has funded the national aboriginal youth suicide prevention strategy.

Some of the highlights of these investments have been the development of a help line in Nunavut for youth having suicidal thoughts; training youth leaders and other community leaders in all three territories in applied suicide intervention skills training; and cultural and on-the-land activities, life skills activities and sport and recreational activities to promote self-esteem and positive identity.

Other activities focus on increasing awareness of suicide risk factors, engaging a wide range of community members in preventive techniques and providing youth counselling.

As well, the "Inuusuvit, Our Way of Life" project is a youth engagement project that includes a corporate partnership with Canon. Through this project, Inuit youth work with youth mentors in acquiring skills to use new media technologies, such as cameras and computers, to explore and promote youth mental health issues and to learn and practise traditional Inuit knowledge and cultural practices.

This project contributes to positive youth mental health through engagement in culture, while developing valuable leadership and communication skills and increasing youth engagement with their communities.

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• (1305)

The Government of Nunavut, Nunavut Tunngavik Inc., the Embrace Life Council and the Royal Canadian Mounted Police have committed to work together on eight key commitments to improve suicide prevention measures in the territories. These include community-based training and resources for youth, strengthening the continuum of mental health services and research to better understand suicide in Nunavut.

Through the Indian residential schools resolution health support program, Health Canada is providing mental and emotional supports for eligible former residential school students and their families. Services are available in all communities across the north, and include aboriginal mental health workers, elders and cultural events, and access to professional counsellors.

Recognizing that reliving these experiences can be very difficult, this year our government is providing \$8 million to aboriginal organizations in the north to provide cultural and emotional support to former students and their families. Part of the healing process is being led through the work of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, which this spring and summer visited 19 communities as part of the northern tour, ending with a national event in Inuvik, Northwest Territories, in early July.

Over 2,500 participants attended the event in Inuvik, which resulted in over 3,200 interactions with the health support team.

This was a very important and emotional event that brought together former students from across the north who travelled to Inuvik or attended events in their communities. For many it was the first time they were sharing their stories. Our support will continue for these students, their families and others who are still coming forward. The government is working with its regional and national partners to ensure that all former students and families are aware of the services available to them through the resolution health support program.

While the federal health portfolio does not have jurisdiction over direct health service delivery in the territories, or direct mental health care services, it collaborates with territorial governments and other partners to address health issues and supports many health promotion activities that directly and indirectly help benefit the mental health of northerners. This year our government is providing \$15 million to the Government of Nunavut, \$12 million to the Government of the Northwest Territories and \$1.9 million to first nations communities in the Yukon to support a range of health promotion activities.

Our government takes seriously its commitment to support aboriginal communities in addressing mental health and addictions. The national native alcohol and drug abuse program supports community-based prevention, intervention and aftercare with a cultural focus. For example, in Yellowknife a traditional program has been developed that includes a sweat lodge, sharing circles and counselling with elders to support clients to start living, or to continue leading, healthy lives.

In closing, the north's greatest resource is the people who live and work there. Our government is proud to work with the territories to deliver concrete improvements to the medical care that northern

families get. As we can see, our government is committed to helping ensure that people in the north have safe, healthy and prosperous communities.

**Mr. Pat Martin (Winnipeg Centre, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for her remarks and the obvious sensitivity that she shows on the issue.

What perhaps struck me most about her speech today was the reference to the over-representation of first nations, Inuit and Métis young people in suicide statistics. We know that suicide is the third leading cause of death among 29- to 49-year-olds generally and the second leading cause of death for the 10- to 24-year-old age group in the general population, but that the suicide rate for aboriginal youth is four to six times higher than that of non-aboriginal people.

Surely that should be a statistic that stops everyone dead in their tracks. Could there be a more revealing social indicator than the despair that must strike first nations, Inuit and Métis youth to take their own lives at such an alarming rate?

Other than people taking their lives due to mental illness, can she elaborate on the social conditions that may lead to the despair that young people feel in first nations, Inuit and Métis communities?

• (1310)

**Mrs. Kelly Block:** Mr. Speaker, the member opposite is quite right in pointing out that there are many circumstances that contribute to why a young person in the north feels hopeless and sees no other way than to end his or her life.

What I would like to focus on is a project that the government has been funding. In February 2011, the government announced \$2.4 million over five years for the Qaujigiartiit Health Research Centre project in Iqaluit, Nunavut, which will help address the needs identified by northerners to ensure good mental and physical health for aboriginal children and youth in their communities.

The project will provide direct support to a number of Nunavut communities by helping to promote positive mental health among children and youth. It will also provide community-based family health education and support, which I believe will go a long way toward addressing those many factors that contribute to suicide being at such a high rate in the north.

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, one of the most telling statistics is the one which references the clock: every 24 hours 10 Canadians are committing suicide on average. I believe that as a society we can do so much better.

Earlier today I made reference to the fact that many different stakeholders want to see involvement in this issue, in developing that national strategy. Most people acknowledge the need for that national strategy. It is encouraging to hear members from all political parties indicate how they feel regarding such a serious issue. In many ways it affects us all.



In attempting to deal with this issue, and I have heard it now for many years, does the member feel that we need to bring it into some sort of timeframe to help bring the stakeholders together? Is there something that can be done on that front?

**Mrs. Kelly Block:** Mr. Speaker, the Government of Canada recognizes that suicide among aboriginal young people is an urgent matter. We also recognize that a federal strategy for suicide prevention in the north would require the full co-operation of the territorial governments since most activities would unfold within their jurisdictions.

While we recognize this is urgent, I want to highlight that in budget 2010 the government invested \$75 million to extend the national aboriginal youth suicide prevention strategy to 2015. That is a \$10 million increase over previous investments.

As I mentioned in my earlier comments, Health Canada has provided nearly \$15 million in the last year to the government of Nunavut, \$12 million to the government of the Northwest Territories and \$1.9 million to the Yukon first nations to support health promotion activities in the territories and to maintain and improve the well-being of the people, which includes mental health. This is bringing together organizations and those governments to address the issue of suicide in the north.

● (1315)

**Mrs. Joy Smith (Kildonan—St. Paul, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I stand in the House today to describe the concrete actions the government is taking to help aboriginal communities and families address the tragic issue of youth suicide. It is an important topic that we have been discussing and one to which members from all sides of the House have been sensitive.

Aboriginal populations in Canada are facing many unique challenges. That is why our government is not using a one-size-fits-all approach and is funding a variety of programs and services that target their unique needs.

As members of the House know too well many first nations, their families and communities face widespread social and economic challenges, poor health outcomes and, perhaps most tragically, the loss of children and youth to suicide.

Aboriginal people continue to have significantly poorer health outcomes than other Canadians. For example, heart disease and diabetes rates among aboriginal people are considerably higher than the rates among the non-aboriginal population. Tuberculosis rates among the Inuit have recently been reported as being 186 times higher than the rate among Canadian born non-aboriginal people.

Possibly the most distressing are the aboriginal suicide rates, which are among the highest in the world. The rate among first nations is 4.3 times higher than the national average. Inuit regions show a rate more than 11 times higher. It is significant.

Unlike suicide rates for non-aboriginal people, rates of aboriginal suicide are highest among the youth. Injury and suicide are the leading causes of death for aboriginal youth. The well-being of this demographic group is particularly pressing considering that aboriginal youth under 20 years of age account for over 40% of the aboriginal population and this figure is rising. The health of these youth literally represents the future health of aboriginal commu-

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nities. Helping aboriginal young people and preventing aboriginal youth suicide is and must continue to be a public priority.

Our government is taking action on aboriginal youth suicide. In the House last year, the hon. Minister of Finance tabled a budget that included nearly \$1 billion in investments for aboriginal people. This included \$285 million for aboriginal health programs and \$75 million to extend the national aboriginal youth suicide prevention strategy until 2015.

The national aboriginal youth suicide prevention strategy exists in order to ensure that aboriginal families and communities have access to critical supports in order to prevent and respond to the most tragic of problems.

This strategy was developed in close partnership with first nations and Inuit people. It is based on a global review of evidence-based suicide prevention approaches. Health Canada worked not only with key first nations and Inuit national and regional organizations, but directly with aboriginal youth in order to ensure this important investment was relevant and would target those who would need it most.

The strategy incorporates the best available evidence with respect to youth suicide prevention.

Experience and research show that culturally-based services are important for positive health outcomes among first nations and Inuit communities, their families and for individuals. Research has also shown a strong link between cultural identity and youth suicide prevention.

The strategy recognizes that the greatest impact on youth suicide prevention comes from community-driven programming developed according to the unique needs and strengths of the people, and they have many strengths.

The national aboriginal youth suicide prevention strategy focuses on building coping and life skills, and other known factors that can protect youth against suicide, including family and social supports, cultural ties, youth leadership and engagement, and school performance.

The strategy has four main elements.

First, it focuses on primary prevention. These are activities which improve overall mental health at the community level. These activities promote an increased awareness of suicide risk and protective factors within families and communities.

● (1320)

Second, the national aboriginal youth suicide prevention strategy supports first nations and Inuit communities that are most vulnerable to suicide.

Community-based activities are known to have the greatest impact on youth and on youth suicide prevention. The evidence indicates that these approaches produce longer term solutions that move at-risk communities toward better mental health and wellness. Based on this evidence, the strategy supports over 150 community-based prevention projects that target youth who are at an elevated risk of suicide.

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The results of these projects are positive. For example, the canoe journey project is yielding tremendous results in several coastal communities in British Columbia. It brings together youth and elders and engages the whole community in traditional activities while building critical life skills and resilience. Participants have described this project as a life-changing experience.

Third, the strategy supports communities by strengthening crisis response capacity in the event of a suicide-related crisis. In many instances this includes partnering with provinces, territories and other sectors to address community needs.

The fourth component of the strategy is the development of new knowledge. This includes work with communities and researchers to build effective approaches to prevent youth suicide. Its partners have included the Canadian Institutes of Health Research, the University of Victoria and McGill University. Some of this research is truly groundbreaking and is helping to inform important programs across the country.

Through all of this work the strategy works closely with national aboriginal organizations, including the Assembly of First Nations and the Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami.

I am pleased to report that the national aboriginal youth suicide prevention strategy is demonstrating measurable success. Communities are reporting that the youth participating in suicide prevention projects demonstrate an increased sense of hope and optimism as well as more pride, discipline and confidence.

We know that people with mental illness issues are often stigmatized and there can be a great reluctance to discuss suicide. It is encouraging to note that the strategy has led to an increase in the number of first nations and Inuit community members who are willing to discuss the issue of suicide.

That is not all. Projects funded through the national aboriginal youth suicide prevention strategy are leading to improved school attendance and performance, the development of safe and supportive community environments, as well as fostering in youth a sense of having skills and being able to contribute to society.

The strategy has also increased the effectiveness of community mental health workers. For example, suicide prevention training funded through the strategy has contributed to an increased confidence among community workers who intervene during a crisis and a decrease in feelings of powerlessness.

As a result of this strategy, front-line workers are better prepared to detect, prevent and intervene in the event of a suicide crisis. Following training, 84% of the workers said they were more attentive to the signs of suicide.

In addition to the national aboriginal youth suicide prevention strategy, our government continues to invest in important long-standing programs that are critical to the long term well-being and health of first nations and Inuit. Due to the success of these initiatives, Canada is considered by many to be a world leader in terms of its innovative and proven aboriginal programs.

For example, the national youth solvent abuse program has been recognized internationally as an effective and holistic interdisciplinary treatment program for youth.

Another successful program in many aboriginal communities is the national native alcohol and drug abuse program. It is an excellent example of a community-based and community-determined program. It is also a leader in incorporating community, cultural and holistic approaches into prevention and treatment programming. Building on the strengths of this program, we are investing \$30.5 million in addiction services for first nations and Inuit as part of the national anti-drug strategy.

Health Canada is working in close partnership with the National Native Addictions Partnership Foundation and many other foundations to help address this serious problem.

● (1325)

**Mr. Pat Martin (Winnipeg Centre, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague from Winnipeg for her very sensitive remarks regarding this compelling social crisis that we have, and I do not use the word “crisis” lightly because perhaps it is our greatest failure. The statistics that she outlined and that others have spoken to serve as our greatest social failure because there could be no more revealing or telling social indicator than the depth of despair it must take for a young person to take his or her own life. In many of these cases, mental illness is not the driving issue, especially in the first nation and Inuit communities where the prevalence is so high.

Next to the overrepresentation of first nations people in our prisons, the overrepresentation of aboriginal Métis and Inuit people in these suicide statistics should stop people dead in their tracks. Why do we tolerate numbers like this? There seems to be a wilful blindness, or maybe people put it on the too-hard-to-do pile because the statistics are so appalling and the problem is so complex that there has been an unwillingness for politicians to go there.

I would ask her to expand further on the points she made regarding these alarming statistics, just for the enlightenment of the viewing public who might be tuning in today.

**Mrs. Joy Smith:** Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for that very insightful question because it is an extremely sensitive issue. Very alarming statistics are coming out, which is why the government has put forth the national youth suicide strategy program.

When the member opposite talked about different aspects of why this happens, we are finding out the cultural identity and all the different issues where we need to have community-based programs. Our government has implemented in 150 communities a national youth suicide prevention strategy to address the down to earth, everyday things that youth face. This is helpful. It makes them feel worthwhile and it makes them feel that they have a lot to contribute.



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**Mr. Rodger Cuzner (Cape Breton—Canso, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, some very compelling statistics have been shared in today's debate, but there have been some good stories as well. There have been some examples shared with the House as to some of the good work going on and where progress is being made.

What is becoming obvious is that there is no real best practices being expressed nationally. What we are seeing is that some provinces are doing better than other provinces, in this case. It should not depend on our area code as to the level of service we get or the opportunities that are presented to us.

Does she see the merit in trying to knit together a national strategy so that all Canadians have the same availability to programs and services when it comes to suicide and depression?

**Mrs. Joy Smith:** Mr. Speaker, again, I am gratified by the member's concern and thoughtful consideration to this project. I am glad that we are talking about this very important issue in the House of Commons today because this is where the nation is represented from coast to coast to coast, where members of Parliament come together and discuss the issues that are foremost in our minds in Canada.

Youth suicide in aboriginal and Inuit communities is certainly one that our government is addressing in large measure with this aboriginal strategy for suicide prevention, a strategy that has actually been implemented in 150 communities. Those are 150 communities that are learning that there are ways to get past this depression and this despair.

Our government has really made great strides in that, and there is more to be done in the future.

● (1330)

[Translation]

**Mr. Justin Trudeau (Papineau, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I will be sharing my time with the member for Charlottetown.

When I was in grade 11 at Collège Jean-de-Brébeuf, I was the coach of the grade 10 trivia team. Some members were young geniuses, but not really nerds in the traditional sense of the word, no more than any of the other students. They were well-adjusted, sharp, nice, good kids. I worked with them for the whole year. A year later, one of these young people, who had been full of life and potential, was dead. He had committed suicide. This was my first experience with this sad reality. To this day, I remember my reaction, my questions, my shock and confusion. Why? I asked myself what I had not seen, what we had not noticed, what his friends, peers, teachers and family had not seen. And, above all, what could we have done, what could I have said to him, how could I have helped him with his problems? We did not know and he did not talk about them.

Today, we find ourselves in a place where we can do something, where we can act to prevent all these tragedies that are happening to families and individuals every year. That is why I am so proud of our motion that calls for a national suicide prevention strategy, because, despite our individual experiences, suicide is not just a personal tragedy, but also a serious public health issue and a priority that must be included in our political discussions.

As critic for youth, post-secondary education and amateur sport, this issue strikes a chord with me. In Canada, close to 4,000 people commit suicide each year, some of them young people between the ages of 15 and 24. In this age group, suicide is the second leading cause of death and accounts for over 20% of deaths. These numbers rise considerably among the most vulnerable youth. Many of our students fall within this age group. In 2009, a survey conducted on six campuses in Ontario indicated that over 50% of students felt hopeless, one in three was depressed and could not function, and almost 10% had thought about suicide in the past 12 months. Suicide affects all of us. It is not just a health issue. It is a social issue in terms of both its causes and its solutions.

Mental illness, abuse, the loss of a loved one at a young age, a family history of suicide and difficult peer relationships are all factors that can make a person vulnerable to suicide.

Looking at the numbers, we know that every dollar invested in mental health care and addiction treatment saves our health care system and our social productivity \$7 to \$30. Although there are no Canadian statistics on the direct and indirect costs of suicide, a series of reports estimates that suicides and suicide attempts cost around \$15 billion a year. That is a lot of money, but the human cost of suicide is even higher, particularly in terms of the emotional and psychological effects on the friends and families of suicide victims.

The problem is that Canada is worse off than other industrialized countries. We have the third-highest rate among these countries. What is worse is that among our gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender, transsexual and intersexual youth, the suicide rate is more than seven times higher than in the heterosexual community.

That is why I provide so much support to groups like Gay Line, which provides advice, but also a listening ear to our young people. They are an excellent suicide prevention tool. That is also why a number of us participated in the "It Gets Better" project to show our young people that even though they feel different, they are an important part of our society and our lives. But we need to do more.

The situation is also dire among our first nations. In recent decades, the number of young aboriginals committing suicide has steadily increased.

● (1335)

It has come to the point where the aboriginal youth suicide rate is seven times higher than the non-aboriginal youth rate.

In July 2001 a Suicide Prevention Advisory Group was jointly established by the National Chief of the Assembly of First Nations and former health minister Allan Rock. The purpose of this advisory group was to review the existing research and formulate a series of practical, doable recommendations to help stem the tide of youth suicides occurring in first nations communities across Canada.

### *Business of Supply*

The report recommends, for one, that Health Canada initiate and support the creation of a comprehensive national first nations mental health strategy—including mandate, policies, and programs—that integrates holistic approaches to suicides, psychiatric disorders and other critical mental, physical, emotional and spiritual problems in first nations communities. But we need to do more.

Health Canada says that the role of the Canadian government is to help Canadians maintain and improve their mental health, including preventing suicidal behaviour. Within its jurisdiction, the government works to develop and disseminate knowledge on mental health promotion and mental illness prevention; provide leadership and governance; develop social marketing campaigns; and conduct surveillance on health trends in population.

In 2007, the federal government provided funding to establish and support the Mental Health Commission of Canada to lead the development of a national mental health strategy. And it is great that the Canadian government is providing monitoring and information, and I am very pleased that it decided to invest in the Mental Health Commission of Canada. It is a major step in the right direction, but we need to do more.

I often have the opportunity to rise in this House to talk about my father's values and politics. I have also had the opportunity to stand up and talk about how proud I am of my grandfather. He was a soldier who, at the same time, served in the House of Commons. I am also very pleased and very proud to be able to rise today to talk about my mother. Among other things, she may be the only woman in Canada to have had a father, a husband and a son elected to the House of Commons. My mother has suffered from depression and bipolar disorder her entire life. She has gone through some extremely tough times and we, as her family members who love her so, have gone through these tough times with her. Nonetheless, with help, support and much love, she has pulled through and now she is doing extraordinary work across the country to destigmatize mental illness and to remind people and governments that we can do a lot to prevent and heal, and even live very productive lives, despite the mental health challenges.

Make no mistake, suicide is largely linked to victims suffering from mental illness. In fact, some form of mental illness is diagnosed in 90% of suicide victims. A Health Canada report on suicide and prevention shows that almost everyone who kills themselves suffers from a form of mental illness such as severe depression, schizophrenia, borderline personality disorder or bipolar disorder. Often they are also drug addicts or alcoholics. We can help them by taking clear and concrete measures.

We must take action because we can. We need to have a national suicide strategy to reach people in need in every sector of our society. We must put our efforts into improving life for our citizens. That is what we on this side of the House sincerely believe in and we hope the government will act accordingly.

• (1340)

[English]

**Mr. Harold Albrecht (Kitchener—Conestoga, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my colleague for his very moving words, especially his vulnerability in sharing his family's journey.

There have been a number of examples shared today during this discussion of good work that is being done. I mentioned earlier Dave Batters' family, which is doing exceptional work and being open about its struggle. If people go on YouTube and search for Dave Batters, they will find a good 30-second promotion to help people be more aware of this issue.

In my own experience, I have worked with a group called Your Life Counts. It is doing good work in terms of an online presence and being available to personally speak with those who contact it. In my riding, the Waterloo Region Suicide Prevention Council does good work. It has a fundraiser golf tournament every year that raises awareness and funds for research.

I have two questions for my colleague. The first is, could he share an example or two from his local area? The more examples we hear of good community work being done will enhance the need for us to see a national leadership role as important. The second is, does he agree that if such a program is initiated, the after care of those who have dealt with suicide is as important as the prevention and intervention work we are talking about today?

[Translation]

**Mr. Justin Trudeau:** Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member for his question. I would also like to commend the excellent work he is doing with his private member's bill on this issue and thank him for all his hard work in this area.

I am honoured to say that my riding has an organization called Les Déprimés Anonymes, or Depression Anonymous. Representatives from that organization came to see me a few weeks ago to talk about the challenges they face and the resources they lack in addressing this serious issue, which affects so many people in my community, like all communities across Canada. They want to have more than just a call centre. They want to raise awareness and bring people together so they can help one another. Simply calling someone for help is not always enough. People need to feel they are part of a community. For every organization in Papineau like Les Déprimés Anonymes, there are many across the country that would benefit from and be strengthened by a national strategy.

**Hon. Geoff Regan (Halifax West, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I thank my hon. colleague for his excellent speech.

Earlier today, our leader, the hon. member for Toronto Centre, talked about the statistics that show a drop in the youth suicide rate in Quebec. I imagine that Quebec must have some best practices that we could talk about here. Would my hon. colleague agree that these kinds of best practices should be integrated into a national strategy?

**Mr. Justin Trudeau:** Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the hon. member for raising the issue of how this is being addressed in Quebec.



We are very proud of what we are accomplishing in Quebec with regard to suicide prevention and mental health. There is still a lot of work to be done but, as with the focus we put on the rehabilitation of criminals rather than on repression, Quebec is often somewhat on the leading edge with what it is doing. I heard a few hon. members fretting about the fact that the federal government is concerning itself with health, which is an area of provincial jurisdiction. However, I would like to reassure all the members of the House that I know that Quebec will be very happy to see the other provinces and the federal government consider this issue, which is very important to us, and to work together to find solutions and put an end to suicide in Canada.

• (1345)

**Mr. Sean Casey (Charlottetown, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, it is an honour for me to participate in this debate on the motion proposed by our leader, the hon. member for Toronto Centre.

I would like to read the motion again:

That the House agree that suicide is more than a personal tragedy, but is also a serious public health issue and public policy priority; and, further, that the House urge the government to work cooperatively with the provinces, territories, representative organizations from First Nations, Inuit, and Métis people, and other stakeholders to establish and fund a National Suicide Prevention Strategy, which among other measures would promote a comprehensive and evidence-driven approach to deal with this terrible loss of life.

[English]

We will spend the day speaking about suicide prevention, but the challenge will be to continue to speak up tomorrow, the next day and beyond. Why? It is because suicide is a terrible thing. It ends a life. It is permanent. It is sad. It is final and it impacts families and our communities. It is also a challenge for each of us here to reflect upon what we can do as legislators, as parliamentarians, to develop programs and strategies to prevent these tragedies. We all must do our part to tear away the taboo associated with talking about mental health issues, depression and suicide.

Studies show that suicide is often connected to mental illness and mood disorders. Among youth, it is often stress, anxiety and bullying. Alcohol and substance abuse are also often associated with suicide as well as the loss of a parent or caregiver in early childhood, the loss or breakup of a relationship, and poverty. It is a terrible stain on our country, a country as wealthy as Canada, to find itself in a situation where far too often people take their lives as a result of financial pressures. Suicide is sometimes related to physical, sexual and mental abuse, isolation and loneliness.

Many of us know the feeling of the loss of a loved one, whether as a result of an accident, a terrible disease like cancer, or the loss of a parent or grandparent through old age. We have all experienced these losses. However, there is something deeply and profoundly sad to hear of someone who believes they have no future, suffers depression, or perhaps just wanting to end the pain and decides to end his or her own life.

I am reminded of an incident that happened just two weeks ago, and members will know this as well. It is a story of a beautiful young man with a great future ahead of him. He was a young man who had many talents and abilities. His parents said he was the most loving person in the world. He killed himself at the age of 14. He had his whole life ahead of him. We later discovered the reason for this terrible tragedy was rampant bullying because of his sexuality.

### *Business of Supply*

This really does cause the mind and heart to pause and think that in this day and age some young people feel that the only option available to them for escape from their tormentors and pain is to take their own life. This is but one example.

The suicide rate for Canadian youth is the third highest in the industrial world. Suicide is the leading cause of death in men aged 25 to 29 and 40 to 44, as well as women in their early 30s. Suicide rates among gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender, transsexual, intersex and two-spirited youth is seven times the rate of heterosexual youth. It is critically important that all of us here in this House condemn any and all forms of homophobia in Canada. It is simply unacceptable.

I want to take a few moments to return to the author of this motion, the hon. member for Toronto Centre and leader of the Liberal Party of Canada.

For the many who suffer silently, they often experience feelings of shame and the idea that their feelings are somehow not normal. There is a perception that being a leader means always being tough, that one must exhibit strength and show no signs of weakness or vulnerability. We often hear that a leader is someone who must have pronounced skills and abilities, someone who exhibits great communication and speaking abilities, and the list goes on.

• (1350)

While all of us would agree that the member for Toronto Centre possesses all of these qualities, his real strength rests in his openness about the depression in his own life and his willingness to say so publicly. By going public about depression, the fact of being vulnerable, for putting a human face to what millions of Canadians have felt and feel today, he and others put a human face to what they may be feeling and perhaps provide a sense that they are not alone, that the spiral of pain and sadness can be overcome. Again, we must confront the taboo of mental illness, and today is a good start.

This is not a controversial motion and I expect members on all sides will support it. It is not a partisan issue; it is a human issue. It is an issue that touches many of us.

I want to focus a bit of my time on veterans and the significant mental health crisis that exists among them. In January 2011 the Department of National Defence and the Department of Veterans Affairs jointly released a study called "Survey on Transition to Civilian Life: Report on Regular Force Veterans".

Here are a few facts. The suicide rate for those in the armed forces is nearly three times higher than the general population. Of all the males who enrolled in the regular forces after 1972 and were released before 2007, a total of 2,620 have died. Of all those who died, more than 500 died of suicide. That is more than one-quarter of them. Those are alarming statistics.

### *Statements by Members*

Here in Canada, suicide is preventable. We can do more to help and provide necessary resources in this fight. We can work with provinces and communities to provide programs and services. Far too often our health services are fragmented, disconnected, incoherent and lacking a national vision. We can do better and we should. At the very least, we should do more for the people the federal government has direct responsibility for: our veterans and our first nations communities.

Today, for me as a new member of Parliament, is an important one. It is issues like this one and the opportunity to speak openly about mental health and suicide that make me proud to be a member of this House.

• (1355)

**Hon. John McKay (Scarborough—Guildwood, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I know the member takes quite an interest in veterans affairs and some of the issues that arise out of veterans affairs.

We do keep careful track of those who fall in the service of our country and those who are injured in the service of our country, but we do not necessarily keep track of those in the military or veterans who commit suicide in the course of their subsequent life after their military service.

I am wondering whether people who commit suicide either while in the military or when they come out and become veterans should be classified really as casualties of war.

**Mr. Sean Casey:** Mr. Speaker, it is absolutely true that there is a crisis within our veterans community with respect to mental health issues. Of all of the veterans who are receiving benefits under the new veterans charter, 60% of them report at least one mental health condition. That is an alarming statistic.

The specific question asked of me by the member is in terms of tracking casualties and the suggestion put forward is that suicide after release from the forces should be counted as a casualty of war. I believe it is an excellent suggestion. Perhaps tracking in that manner would better help the Department of Veterans Affairs and our Department of National Defence to get a real handle on the magnitude of this problem and better approach strategies for prevention.

**Mr. Chris Alexander (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of National Defence, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I think we all thank the member for Charlottetown for touching on the plight of veterans too often affected by post-traumatic stress, as well as serving members of our armed forces returning from Afghanistan and other places. This government has done an enormous amount to meet their needs. We have increased the number of mental health specialists. We have increased the benefits and the monitoring. However, it is clear that there is more we could do and further debate on this issue, perhaps, should do.

Could the member opposite, given everything that he said, highlight for the House what his top suggestion would be? What is the one additional measure or investment he would advise us to make to address this problem of suicide rates among veterans and Canadian Forces members returning from overseas?

**Mr. Sean Casey:** Mr. Speaker, a couple of weeks ago, I spent a full hour with a couple of veterans, one of whom was a medical

doctor who outlined for me in some detail the difficulty in getting support for mental health issues when one is not discharged as a result of medical reasons. It seems as though, if a person is given a medical discharge, it is much easier to access the support mechanisms. It is a real problem for those who either encounter or own up to mental health issues after they are released.

I believe that what we need is a compilation of best practices and to engage in an exercise like that we should be able to identify those specific strategies that have worked in other jurisdictions and employ them here in Canada.

**Mrs. Carol Hughes (Algoma—Manitoulin—Kapuskasing, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I appreciate my colleague's speech on this issue. It is near and dear to a lot of our hearts. My daughter's young friend passed away by suicide at the age of 13.

Does the hon. member not feel that we need to make better use and ensure that we put in place a national strategy on suicide given the fact that there are so many difficult areas in the spectrum?

• (1400)

**Mr. Sean Casey:** Mr. Speaker, I am entirely in agreement with the hon. member. In fact, that is precisely what the motion calls for: We need to have a suicide prevention strategy.

I take it from the question that she is also in support and I would urge her and members of her party to vote in favour of the motion.

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## STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

[English]

### NORTH SHORE CULINARY SCHOOL

**Mr. Andrew Saxton (North Vancouver, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, across our country, thousands of Canadians spend countless hours of their free time in the service of others. They do this in order to help create a better society for all Canadians.

One such individual is Don Guthro from North Vancouver. Mr. Guthro operates a tuition-free culinary school located in my riding. This program is aimed at teaching homeless and at-risk youth valuable culinary skills that they can then use to find employment and better their lives. The program has been so successful that recently it announced plans to expand.

The North Shore Culinary School offers vulnerable youth an opportunity to gain skills that can help them turn their lives around. The school also helps provide at-risk youth with a sense of pride and personal confidence. The school gives people a chance that they might otherwise not have had. It has truly impacted the lives of hundreds of teenagers and young adults in my riding.

People, like Don Guthro, make an important contribution to our country and it is important that we take the time to thank them for their hard work. I encourage all Canadians to recognize the people who in their own community work so hard on behalf of others.



## HUMAN RESOURCES

**Mr. Malcolm Allen (Welland, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, the Conservative government likes to tell Canadians that corporate tax cuts help create jobs.

The fact is that no strings attached corporate tax giveaways to profitable corporations are not the solution to Canada's growing unemployment.

We have just witnessed the latest plant closure in Welland. This past Saturday, over 300 workers worked their final shift at Henniges Automotive. Henniges, just like John Deere three years ago, gladly took the millions of dollars in corporate tax breaks that the government gave them, invested the money in Mexico and laid off Canadian workers. It is shameful.

The Conservatives are out of touch with workers, as witnessed by the comments of a Henniges employee who said, referring to politicians, "They need to take off their rose-coloured glasses and see the real world as it is".

Canadian workers are clearly frustrated by the inaction of the Conservative government. It is time to stand up for working Canadians who ask for no more than a decent paying job to raise their families and build their communities. It is not too much to ask for. We need to get that job done on behalf of Canadian workers.

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## INTERNATIONAL TRADE

**Mr. Lee Richardson (Calgary Centre, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I stand today to discuss the importance of continuing to expand our markets abroad for Canadians.

Our government recently undertook an important step forward in deepening Canada's economic ties with Southeast Asia by adopting a joint declaration of co-operation with ASEAN, the Association of South East Asian Nations.

Our government is opening to new markets for Canadian businesses in Asia, which we know will sustain and create jobs and prosperity for hard-working citizens both here and in Asian countries.

Trade accounts for over 60% of Canada's annual GDP and one in five Canadian jobs. When we trade, prices for goods and services go down, wages, salaries and the standard of living go up, and businesses are able to hire more workers.

That is why we continue to expand and diversify our trade markets. That is why our first trade and investment arrangement with ASEAN is another example of our government's job-creating, pro-trade plan.

Canada's ambitious free trade plan is opening new markets and creating opportunities for Canadian businesses and jobs for Canadian workers.

\* \* \*

## PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND ELECTIONS

**Hon. Wayne Easter (Malpeque, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I stand today to congratulate Premier Robert Ghiz and the Liberal Party of

## Statements by Members

Prince Edward Island for their outstanding victory last night in the provincial election.

Electing 22 Liberals out of the 27 seats to foster a second term for Premier Ghiz and his team builds on the progressive and forward-looking policies he established in term one.

The Liberal Party had a strong platform and stuck to their message in the face of negative personal attacks never seen before in Island politics. Improving health care, programs for seniors, early learning and K to 12, bettering post-secondary education, as well as support for our primary industries are part of that positive message.

Interference from the office of the Minister of Citizenship, Immigration and Multiculturalism was unacceptable but Islanders saw through the political games.

I congratulate all candidates and all leaders for their part in making democracy work. The province is better for it.

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● (1405)

## WORLD SIGHT DAY

**Mr. Paul Calandra (Oak Ridges—Markham, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I am proud to stand in the House to highlight the launch of World Sight Day 2011 and notably visitors in Ottawa participating in this great occasion, including members of VISION 2020 Canada and Mark DeMontis, a blind hockey player currently en route in-line skating from Halifax to Toronto.

October 13 is World Sight Day, an international day of awareness to focus attention on the right to sight, recognizing the global issue of avoidable blindness and visual impairment, in anticipation of eliminating avoidable causes by the year 2020.

Worldwide, an estimated 39 million people are blind and each year more than 45,000 Canadians lose their vision at a cost of \$15.8 billion to Canadian taxpayers, and yet 80% of blindness is avoidable. Positive progress is being made and infectious causes of blindness have greatly reduced over the past 20 years.

I am proud to say the launch of World Sight Day 2011 has members and senators from all parties supporting VISION 2020's goal. I hope both sides can continue this co-operation for Canadians.

\* \* \*

## MENTAL HEALTH

**Mr. Fin Donnelly (New Westminster—Coquitlam, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I stand today to recognize Mental Illness Awareness Week.

### *Statements by Members*

Nearly six million Canadians are likely to experience a diagnosable mental illness in their lifetime, that is one in five Canadians, and yet the federal and provincial governments have downsized institutional care while not increasing community based services.

My riding is home to British Columbia's primary mental health facility, Riverview Hospital. This nearly 100 year-old facility is home to one of Canada's best arboretums and numerous heritage buildings. Instead of investing in this facility and supporting its development as a mental health sanctuary and residential treatment and diagnostic facility for people with mental illness, the provincial and federal governments have closed many of the buildings and allowed this facility to fall into disrepair.

We know the way forward to combatting the stigma associated with mental illness is providing proper care. We have the ability to make Riverview a centre of excellence in mental health and wellness in this country.

Today, during Mental Illness Awareness Week, I call upon the federal government to commit to mental health, bridge the gap in service for those with severe mental illness and invest in Riverview.

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### LACROSSE

**Mr. Kyle Seeback (Brampton West, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I stand today to congratulate the Brampton Excelsior's Senior Men's Lacrosse Team for bringing home the 2011 Mann Cup. This is the Excelsior's 11th time winning this Canadian national championship title, including three out of the past four years.

On September 12, the Excelsior's claimed the Mann Cup with a 6-3 victory over the Langley Thunder. I know my colleague, the member for Langley, was disappointed, but I understand it was their first time in the championship and I commend them on their effort.

Lacrosse has been known as Canada's national game since 1859, making it a fundamental part of our culture, tradition and heritage. It is wonderful to see lacrosse producing some of the finest athletes in sports today.

I once again applaud the Excelsiors and wish them continued success. I look forward to seeing them bring home many more victories to Brampton.

Go Excelsior, go!

\* \* \*

### FOREST INDUSTRY

**Mr. Rob Clarke (Desnethé—Missinippi—Churchill River, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure and honour to announce the reopening of the Big River sawmill by Carrier Forest Products in Big River, Saskatchewan. This mill complex will create over 100 jobs in Big River and the surrounding area, and many more in harvesting, transportation and the reforestation industries.

This is fantastic news. Mills and forestry industries provide jobs and financial growth in my riding in northern Saskatchewan. It heartens me to see that the Big River mill will be up and running and contributing to the financial growth of our Canadian economy. This

mill will also have the opportunity to market its products overseas with the many trade agreements our government has brokered.

The forest industry in Saskatchewan and Desnethé—Missinippi—Churchill River clearly has a bright future ahead.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

### STAR ACADÉMIE COMPETITION

**Mr. Yvon Godin (Acadie—Bathurst, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, it is with great pleasure that I rise today to acknowledge three young women from my riding who are participating in the Star Académie competition: Kelly Blais from Paquetville, Joannie Benoît from Tracadie-Sheila, and Annabelle Doucet from Nigadoo.

In the first round of auditions, Kelly, Joannie and Annabelle were chosen from more than 5,000 people. Last Thursday, in Montreal, Kelly was selected by the judges and earned a spot among the semi-finalists. This week, it is Joannie's turn to go on stage for a chance to become a semi-finalist. Annabelle will also have the opportunity to show off her talent and earn one of the 30 spots in the semi-finals.

Just like Wilfred LeBouthillier and Annie Blanchard, you are proof that Acadie—Bathurst has talent. Therefore, I would like to wish you the best of luck and tell you that we are all behind you. Your families and friends and our community take great pride in supporting your achievements.

\* \* \*

● (1410)

[English]

### SIKH COMMUNITY

**Mrs. Nina Grewal (Fleetwood—Port Kells, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, a British Columbian is making history yet again. Last month, Lieutenant Colonel Harjit Singh Sajjan became the first Sikh in Canada to take command of a regiment, the British Columbia Regiment.

Canada's Sikh community has a proud history of brave military service. Canadian Sikh soldiers have fought in every major Canadian war since World War I, where a Sikh Canadian soldier was wounded at Vimy Ridge.

Lieutenant Colonel Sajjan, a former police officer, is the best and most recent example of how our Sikh community is contributing to our great country.

I am very proud to stand today on behalf of my party and my constituents and congratulate Lieutenant Colonel Harjit Singh Sajjan, a true hero, and thank him for all he has done. He has made us all very proud.



[Translation]

### MARK DEMONTIS

**Ms. Manon Perreault (Montcalm, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, today is World Sight Day and I would like to highlight the contribution of a very courageous and determined individual. Mark DeMontis is a young man who lost his sight at the age of 17 as a result of a rare illness, Leber optic neuropathy. Nevertheless, he does not hesitate to devote his time to Courage Canada. Since 2009, Mark has been in-line skating from Halifax to Toronto to raise money to start blind hockey clubs, such as the Montreal Hiboux.

Through his campaign, he hopes to raise the public's awareness of Courage Canada's objectives, which include giving visually impaired people the opportunity to participate in our national sport. Today is the 52nd day of his annual journey. I invite the members of the House to meet Mark and congratulate him this afternoon at 3:30 p.m. on the steps of Parliament. I would like to warmly congratulate Mark DeMontis on his involvement and on his remarkable accomplishments.

\* \* \*

[English]

### CONFERENCE ON WOMEN'S ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT

**Ms. Lois Brown (Newmarket—Aurora, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I rise to inform the House of a very important event taking place in Ottawa this week. Thanks to the initiative of the Minister of International Cooperation, CIDA and UN Women are co-hosting a conference on women's economic empowerment.

[Translation]

This conference will bring together entrepreneurs, politicians, researchers and industry and business leaders to find concrete ways to support business opportunities and to improve the security of women around the world.

Our government understands that both long-term, sustainable economic growth and social progress require the full participation of women.

[English]

The participants here in Ottawa represent a diverse group of women and men. Their deliberations will identify concrete ways for women to participate in the economy and strengthen their economic security and rights.

I would like to welcome all the conference participants and wish them the utmost success in their discussions on this incredibly important issue to women around the globe.

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### MENTAL HEALTH

**Hon. Hedy Fry (Vancouver Centre, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, this is Mental Illness Awareness Week. Nearly six million Canadians will likely suffer mental illness in their lifetimes. Mental illness is not limited to age, socio-economic status or gender, but we know that some groups are disproportionately affected in our society. The

### Statements by Members

causes of mental illness are biological, social, psychological and spiritual.

The stigma of mental illness forces patients and their families into the shadows, ashamed to speak out or seek treatment, yet the associated high risk of suicide and substance abuse demands early intervention.

Unfortunately, in Canada far fewer resources are dedicated to research, prevention, diagnosis and treatment of mental illness than to physical disease.

It is time to bring mental illness into the same prominence as physical disease in the health care continuum as core necessary services under the Canada Health Act.

\* \* \*

● (1415)

### CITIZENSHIP AND IMMIGRATION

**Ms. Kerry-Lynne D. Findlay (Delta—Richmond East, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, Canadians gave our Conservative government a strong mandate to take fair, reasonable and tough action to prevent the abuse of Canada's immigration system by human smugglers. Canada has a long tradition of opening its doors to those who work hard and play by the rules. However, we must crack down on those who seek to take advantage of our generosity. That is exactly what the Preventing Human Smugglers from Abusing Canada's Immigration System Act does.

Yesterday the NDP member for Honoré-Mercier stated that in bringing forward this bill, Canada was acting as a torturer. I am appalled at such language from Her Majesty's Loyal Opposition. Our country has a strong and proud record of supporting human rights at home and abroad.

I call on NDP members to stop using such inappropriate language for political gain among their radical socialist base and to finally stop putting the rights of criminals ahead of the rights of law-abiding Canadians.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

### NATIONAL QUEBEC WOMEN'S CENTRES DAY

**Mrs. Sana Hassainia (Verchères—Les Patriotes, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise today to highlight National Quebec Women's Centres Day. On the first Tuesday of October since 2003, we have collectively celebrated the contributions these organizations have made in our communities. These centres truly are unparalleled community resources. They provide assistance to women in need and often serve as a refuge for women in distress. The workers in these organizations also contribute to Quebec's economic development by offering training to help women rejoin the workforce.

Although they face many challenges, this year, these pioneers are celebrating National Quebec Women's Centres Day with the theme of "Feminist for the fun of it". They remind us that the fight for equality is above all a fight of love, optimism and hope. I am very pleased to salute their courage and determination.

*Oral Questions*

On behalf of all Quebec women, I thank you for helping to create a just society, and I would like to take this opportunity to call on the government to show solidarity by restoring funding to these centres.

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[English]

**THE ECONOMY**

**Mr. James Bezan (Selkirk—Interlake, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, yesterday we voted on a ways and means motion for the budget implementation bill, yet the members of the official opposition opposed it.

Our government's top priority remains completing the economic recovery. Canadians gave our Conservative government a strong mandate to stay focused on the economy and pass measures aimed at strengthening both our economic recovery and our country. We are following through on these commitments with our parliamentary agenda.

The next phase of Canada's economic action plan will preserve this country's advantage in the global economy. Key tax relief in the plan includes the family caregiver tax credit, the children's arts tax credit, the volunteer firefighter tax credit and tax relief for the manufacturing sector.

Our government is staying the course with our low-tax plan to create jobs and growth.

The last thing the Canadian economy needs is a massive NDP tax hike that would kill jobs, stall our recovery, and set Canadian families back.

**ORAL QUESTIONS**

[Translation]

**HIGHWAY INFRASTRUCTURE**

**Mrs. Nycole Turmel (Leader of the Opposition, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, the Champlain Bridge is a vital economic artery for Montreal and all of eastern Canada. It is falling apart. This has been dragging on far too long.

Can the Prime Minister confirm that the government will finally respond to the demands of the public and the NDP and announce tomorrow that a new bridge will be built?

**Right Hon. Stephen Harper (Prime Minister, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, our government has taken the initiative of investing money to ensure the bridge's safety on several occasions. It is indeed an essential asset for that region. However, I am disappointed that every time we invested money, the NDP voted against those investments in the greater Montreal area.

\* \* \*

[English]

**THE ECONOMY**

**Mrs. Nycole Turmel (Hull—Aylmer, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, yesterday the Conservatives endorsed the NDP's economic policy. Now that the House has spoken with one voice, will the Prime

Minister finally do something about job creation, strengthening pensions, improving aging infrastructure and maintaining the public sector contribution to the economy?

Will he apply the House's prescription in order to prevent another Conservative recession?

**Right Hon. Stephen Harper (Prime Minister, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, last night we did vote for a resolution that was extremely vague and general in nature, and I guess I congratulate the NDP for that.

What I do not congratulate it for, though, is the fact that immediately afterward we tabled literally hundreds of pages of specific economic actions, and the NDP chose to vote against those.

It is time for the NDP to get beyond vague bromides and start to actually vote for things that are doing good work for the Canadian economy.

• (1420)

[Translation]

**Mrs. Nycole Turmel (Leader of the Opposition, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Finance ignored reality again this morning and predicted that Canada would not go into a recession. He said the same thing in 2008 and we all know how that turned out. Some two million Canadians are unemployed and cannot find jobs. Yesterday, this House voted unanimously for the government to take action.

Where is their job creation plan?

**Right Hon. Stephen Harper (Prime Minister, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, it is important to note that there are analysts and experts who feel that a recession is unlikely for the Canadian economy, but of course the global situation is very fragile at the moment. That is why our government has its economic action plan. Yesterday in this House, we tabled hundreds of pages of specific measures to stimulate growth and create jobs. I encourage the NDP to stop voting against measures that are good for Canadians and our economy.

**Ms. Peggy Nash (Parkdale—High Park, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, workers' wages are not even keeping up with inflation. This government's response is to give billions of dollars worth of gifts to profitable companies.

In theory, eventually all this money will find its way back into workers' pockets. But that is obviously not the case. The result? Record levels of personal debt.

What solutions does this government have to create good jobs and tackle the debt crisis?

[English]

**Hon. Ted Menzies (Minister of State (Finance), CPC):** Mr. Speaker, we put forward a plan in June and, if I recall, the NDP actually voted against every measure in it.

We are going to allow New Democrats to redeem themselves, because we have now tabled budget implementation act number two, which puts in place an extension of our Jobs and Economic Growth Act. In this is the temporary hiring credit for small business.



That is one of many items in this budget implementation act that would actually help create more jobs for Canadians. I would hope that the NDP would vote for it this time.

**Ms. Peggy Nash (Parkdale—High Park, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, just reannouncing their failed or misguided policies is not good enough.

Canadians are worried. Canadians are crying out for immediate action, and they want the creation of decent jobs. The government is squandering billions of dollars on fruitless corporate tax giveaways, but Canadian wages are falling in real terms, partly because of the government's failure to protect the manufacturing sector.

When will the government realize that stale reannouncements and photo ops will not save its misguided austerity strategy?

**Hon. Ted Menzies (Minister of State (Finance), CPC):** Mr. Speaker, there are many quotes that I could use from observers around the world in reaction to a question like that which is all about fear and negativity.

Let me quote *Forbes* magazine, and I know the NDP do not often read this, "Canada ranks No. 1 in our annual look at the Best Countries for Business". It goes on to say, "Canada moves up from No. 4 in last year's ranking thanks to its improved tax standing".

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#### SUICIDE PREVENTION

**Hon. Bob Rae (Toronto Centre, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, there seems to be a very strong consensus developing in the House and in the debate, which I am sure the Prime Minister has been following today, on the issue of creating a credible national strategy to prevent suicide, which is higher in Canada than it is in most of our neighbouring countries.

The resolution is quite specific. It calls for the creation of a new fund and for the creation of a national strategy. I wonder if the Prime Minister could tell us what specific action he plans to take in response to the discussions and the vote that is coming today.

**Right Hon. Stephen Harper (Prime Minister, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, this is obviously a very important issue. Far too many Canadian households are affected by the anguish of a suicide. As many members will know, we on this side of the House had the suicide of one of our former colleagues. We understand well the pain that this causes.

The government has taken important initiatives, such as the setting up of the Mental Health Commission and specific programs to help with suicide prevention in communities across the country. Obviously, we will look at any specific ideas to see how we can improve on this particular national health problem.

● (1425)

[Translation]

**Hon. Bob Rae (Toronto Centre, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, we were hoping for a more specific answer, but we will try again.

The government clearly has a responsibility towards our country's veterans. Between 1972 and 2006, 500 former soldiers took their own lives.

#### Oral Questions

What will the Prime Minister do to ensure that there is not the same level of suicide and tragedy among the new wave of young men returning from difficult battles in Afghanistan?

**Right Hon. Stephen Harper (Prime Minister, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, all suicides are a tragedy for our families, and we want to prevent this from happening to our soldiers and our veterans. This is a very serious concern. We have doubled our support in this regard, but we are always prepared to look at how we can improve our performance.

[English]

**Hon. Bob Rae (Toronto Centre, Lib.):** In the same vein, Mr. Speaker, we have the situation affecting the other large group of Canadians for whom the federal government has a very clear constitutional responsibility and that of course is the aboriginal population of the country.

The rate of suicide among young aboriginals has skyrocketed. It is high right across the board in community after community. We cannot take any pride in what is taking place. Clear action does have to be taken.

I would like to again ask the Prime Minister. Could he please take us through the measures which the government plans to take to ensure that we are leading the way in this question and not falling—

**The Speaker:** The right hon. Prime Minister.

**Right Hon. Stephen Harper (Prime Minister, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I am reluctant to speak for a minister on this but I can certainly inform the House that we are well aware of this fact. That is why we do have programs that specifically look at this phenomenon in aboriginal communities and try to decide how to deal with it. Obviously, this is a complex phenomenon.

One of the things we want to do besides tackling that program directly is to ensure that we create hope and opportunity in those communities. In many parts of the country where those communities are located there is unprecedented economic opportunity and we want to ensure young aboriginal people participate in those opportunities.

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#### AFGHANISTAN

**Mr. Jack Harris (St. John's East, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, while the Minister of National Defence was jetting around in the Challenger, the Prime Minister was keeping him out of the loop on Afghanistan.

When asked if he and the Prime Minister discussed the idea of a blue ribbon panel on the war, the minister said it was not put before cabinet and admitted, "I didn't know all of the specifics". Canadians are being asked to swallow a lot from the minister, from his jet-setting lifestyle to his judgment on over-priced fighter jets.

How can Canadians trust the minister when the Prime Minister does not even trust him with important decisions?

**Hon. Peter MacKay (Minister of National Defence, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the overblown rhetoric, the hyperventilating from the member opposite takes away from many of the serious issues that we do discuss. These are issues like suicide and issues that relate directly to the mission in Afghanistan.

### Oral Questions

I give him great assurance that this government takes those issues very seriously and we take the issue of public finance very seriously. We make the investments that are necessary in giving the men and women of our search and rescue the proper equipment. We will continue to act in a fiscally prudent and responsible way. I would give the member the opportunity to do the same.

**Mr. Jack Harris (St. John's East, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I still have to come back to the disconnect between the Prime Minister and his own Minister of National Defence.

Particularly on Afghanistan, reacting to the Prime Minister's 2008 announcement that all troops would be out of Afghanistan by 2011, this minister said to a journalist, and I quote: "I don't know. I heard it the same time you heard it".

How is it that our defence minister heard about a major change in military policy through the media? How are Canadians supposed to put their trust in him when even the Prime Minister does not?

**Hon. Peter MacKay (Minister of National Defence, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, 2008 was quite a while ago. I am surprised the member is just hearing about this now. We have, of course, extended the mission in Afghanistan and transformed it to the important training mission.

I was in Washington on Friday meeting with the secretary of defence to discuss the important role that Canada is playing there and the important contributions that Canada is making to world peace and security. We have seen that in Libya with the leadership of Lieutenant General Charlie Bouchard and as we are seeing now in Kabul and those training bases in the north of the country. These are important contributions of which all Canadians can be extremely proud.

● (1430)

[Translation]

**Ms. Hélène Laverdière (Laurier-Sainte-Marie, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister does not trust his own Minister of National Defence. He did not update the minister on important decisions being made about the war in Afghanistan. Yesterday, we learned that he kept the minister in the dark about the mission.

How can Canadians trust the Minister of National Defence when the Prime Minister himself does not trust him?

**Hon. Peter MacKay (Minister of National Defence, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, as I said yesterday, the government, the Prime Minister, the cabinet and I always work closely together towards a common goal, be it in Afghanistan, in Libya or in other places around the world. This co-operation is necessary. I hope that she has the same kind of co-operation from the NDP leadership.

**Ms. Hélène Laverdière (Laurier-Sainte-Marie, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, the Minister of National Defence says that he was not kept in the loop about all of the details of the Afghan mission.

In the book titled *The Savage War*, the minister talks about the decision to strike a committee concerning the mission. He said, "It wasn't discussed with the broader cabinet, no." And he added, "I didn't know all of the specifics."

How can Canadians trust this government? How can they trust a minister who is kept in the dark by his Prime Minister?

[English]

**Hon. Peter MacKay (Minister of National Defence, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, to that I would simply say that Canadians must have had some level of trust because in May of this year they re-elected this government with a majority, national Conservative government.

It is the important decisions with respect to Afghanistan, Libya, our contributions in 16 missions internationally, our various government departments, including CIDA and the Department of Foreign Affairs, that we continue to make Canadians very proud of the efforts that Canadians, in both the armed forces and our professional service, are making around the globe.

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### OFFICIAL LANGUAGES

**Mr. Yvon Godin (Acadie—Bathurst, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, it is a majority of 39%.

[Translation]

The Minister of Foreign Affairs tabled documents in the House of Commons regarding the transfer of Afghan detainees without having them translated. This is in violation of the Official Languages Act.

However, this government refuses to look into why the minister violated the act. His attitude is disrespectful to francophone and anglophone Canadians who want to understand what is happening in Parliament in their own language.

Will the Conservatives finally respect the Official Languages Act and have the documents translated, as provided for in the act?

**Hon. John Baird (Minister of Foreign Affairs, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, yes, I tabled the documents in the House. Before I tabled these documents in the language that the judges used to send them to the government, I asked all of the NDP members whether they were in favour of having them tabled, and all of the NDP members said yes.

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### NATIONAL DEFENCE

**Ms. Christine Moore (Abitibi—Témiscamingue, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, yesterday, CBC revealed that the cost of the F-35s could double by the time they are delivered. Rather than the \$65 million that this government initially told us that each plane would cost, they could cost over \$133 million each.

Why is this government the only one that believes Lockheed Martin's initial cost estimates? Why does this government not see the obvious? The replacement of the CF-18s requires an open and transparent competition.

[English]

**Hon. Peter MacKay (Minister of National Defence, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, our government has been very clear. We have dedicated \$9 billion to this important acquisition of F-35s.

These aircraft, as the House will know, will replace our aging CF-18 fleet of fighter jets. These aircraft, like other aircraft, have served our country extremely well. They are used in Libya today. They have been used in previous missions, but that they aging.



As a matter of course we are taking the responsible step of following a procurement process that has been in place for a significant period of time in which a number of countries are participating.

[Translation]

**Ms. Christine Moore (Abitibi—Témiscamingue, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, while the costs related to the F-35s continue to rise, the Associate Minister of National Defence and the Minister of National Defence claim that the F-35s and their long-term maintenance will cost \$9 billion rather than \$16 billion. While every other country that wants to buy F-35s expects to pay a lot more, this government is the only one that thinks that it can get them for a low price.

Will this government stop trying to mislead the public and tell people the truth: that the F-35s are not going to cost \$9 billion or even \$16 billion but \$30 billion?

• (1435)

[English]

**Hon. Peter MacKay (Minister of National Defence, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, we have been crystal clear. We committed \$9 billion for the replacement of the CF-18. In fact, it not only includes the cost of the aircraft, this will include: spares, weapons systems, infrastructure and training simulators as well as the contingency associated with this important procurement.

We are purchasing the most cost-effective variant at the prime of peak production when the costs will be at their lowest. Even the Parliamentary Budget Officer has admitted to that.

Why are the NDP members constantly against getting the best equipment for the best forces in the world?

**Mr. Matthew Kellway (Beaches—East York, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, the government continues to pour money down the black hole of the F-35 program. That is despite multiple delays, multiple setbacks and massive cost overruns predicted, not only by our Parliamentary Budget Officer, but even by the Pentagon.

The out-of-touch government would rather blow billions of dollars than admit it has made a mistake.

We know the Prime Minister and the Minister of National Defence do not talk, but is the Prime Minister aware that the F-35 jets are an unaffordable sinkhole?

**Hon. Peter MacKay (Minister of National Defence, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I know the member is new to the file and new to the House. I will repeat for him, \$9 billion have been set aside for this project. We will be receiving these aircraft some time after 2016. This is a result of a pressing need to replace the current CF-18 jets.

This is the best aircraft, the only aircraft, which is fifth generation, available to the Canadian Forces. This recommendation comes from the Chief of the Air Staff. All of the experts agree, this is the best aircraft for the best country for the best forces.

**Mr. Matthew Kellway (Beaches—East York, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, we have submarines rusting in dry dock. We have helicopters being raided for spare parts. Yet, Conservatives insist on writing a blank cheque to the U.S. military. Even John McCain calls the F-35 program “a train wreck”.

### Oral Questions

Other governments are reducing their F-35 orders, switching to other fighter jets or investing in equipment they already have, so why are the Conservatives taking a flyer on the F-35s, even when they are in a tailspin?

**Hon. Peter MacKay (Minister of National Defence, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, so much of what that member just said is completely off base. So much of it is completely disconnected to what the needs of the men and women of the Canadian Forces have clearly expressed. So much of it is against our national defence interests, but I am not the least bit surprised.

Consistently in this House, consistently throughout our history, we have seen the New Democratic Party oppose every step that we take to improve the life, the training, the work of the Canadian Forces. That has been its consistent position.

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### HEALTH

**Hon. Carolyn Bennett (St. Paul's, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, from the chief coroner's reports to pleas from the chief and Grand Chief Beardy, the suicides in Pikangikum First Nation, 60 in the last decade and 5 this summer alone, have become a tragedy of national proportion.

The chief coroner had 100 recommendations.

What exactly will the Minister of Health declare that she will do today to deal with this unbelievable tragedy before one more life is lost?

**Hon. Leona Aglukkaq (Minister of Health and Minister of the Canadian Northern Economic Development Agency, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, our government has made the investment in programs to support initiatives under the national aboriginal youth suicide prevention program. To date, we funded over 150 community-based projects with the investments that we have made in budget 2010. This is an area that is of concern to us, as far too many Canadian families have to deal with the anguish, but we are acting on the recommendations through the national aboriginal youth suicide program.

[Translation]

**Mr. Ted Hsu (Kingston and the Islands, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, in Nunavik, the suicide rate is 25 times higher than the Quebec average, which is already the highest in the country. Earlier this year, two young people committed suicide in less than two months in Kuujuaq, a community of less than 2,200 people. No government is doing enough to address the issue of suicide.

What does this government plan to do to improve support and health services in the community?

• (1440)

[English]

**Hon. Leona Aglukkaq (Minister of Health and Minister of the Canadian Northern Economic Development Agency, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, there is no one answer to address suicide.

### Oral Questions

Our government has provided significant investments through the Canadian Institutes of Health Research on mental health. Our government also supports many major health promotion activities that have direct and indirect benefits on the mental health of Canadians, including programs like the embrace life council, the national aboriginal youth suicide prevention strategy, the national anti-drug strategy, the aboriginal head start, community action program for children, family violence initiatives, brighter futures, building healthy communities, and so on.

[Translation]

**Mr. Justin Trudeau (Papineau, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, in Canada, thousands of people commit suicide each year, and far too many of them are young people between the ages of 15 and 24. Suicide is the second leading cause of death among young people in this age group. This already alarming suicide rate among young people is seven times higher among aboriginal and homosexual youth.

As critic for youth, I would like to ask the government if it is prepared to invest specifically in youth suicide prevention, particularly for marginalized and vulnerable youth.

[English]

**Hon. Leona Aglukkaq (Minister of Health and Minister of the Canadian Northern Economic Development Agency, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, since coming into power, our Conservative government has worked to improve the quality of life of all Canadians dealing with mental health challenges.

Earlier this year, I was proud to announce significant funding for the mental health projects to help improve the emotional and social health of children aged 6 to 12 years of age, as well as parents, teachers and community leaders. We look forward to the continued progress of the Mental Health Commission and these projects in promoting mental health in Canada.

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[Translation]

### THE ENVIRONMENT

**Ms. Megan Leslie (Halifax, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, the Commissioner of the Environment and Sustainable Development is clear: our natural resources are being developed despite the lack of information on the environmental impact. The Minister of the Environment has invested billions of dollars with no results. That is bad management.

The minister has already broken his promise to regulate oil sands emissions this year. When will he implement an environmental plan for developing this natural resource?

**Hon. Peter Kent (Minister of the Environment, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, that question leaves out certain facts.

[English]

I am disappointed, though not surprised, by the opposition's failure to recognize the commissioner's positive words on our government's accomplishments and our commitment with regard to oil sands monitoring. For example, the commissioner says:

In my view, the federal government has taken an important step forward by both acknowledging the deficiencies of the current system and setting out a detailed plan to fix them.

Our government does have a plan and I am glad the environment commissioner acknowledges it.

**Ms. Megan Leslie (Halifax, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, there is no plan and the Auditor General's report spells it out for us in black and white.

It turns out that from day one the government actually planned to fail on fighting pollution and climate change.

Since its first plan was introduced in 2007, reductions are down by 90%, we have a hole in the ozone twice the size of Ontario, we have out of control oil sands pollution and there are ever-rising emissions.

Why are the Conservatives refusing to act? Why have they given up on the environment?

**Hon. Peter Kent (Minister of the Environment, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, our government has definitely not given up on the environment.

I was delighted that the commissioner acknowledged that, in recognizing that beyond Kyoto, the federal government has made new international and national commitments to the Copenhagen accord and the Cancun agreements.

I can assure the opposition that our government is working to ensure Canadians have clean water to drink and clean air to breathe for generations to come.

[Translation]

**Ms. Laurin Liu (Rivière-des-Mille-Îles, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, the report tabled today confirms that the government gets failing marks when it comes to environmental protection. It is just one more example of how this government is not interested in the reality of the situation and has no plan for our environment.

There is a hole in the ozone layer. That is a scientific fact.

Will the government commit to maintaining funding for the monitoring program?

• (1445)

[English]

**Hon. Peter Kent (Minister of the Environment, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the NDP is all too willing to abandon Canada's interests and to sacrifice jobs for Canadians.

Our government will balance the need to protect Canada's environment with the need to protect jobs for Canadians.

As I have answered many times in the House in recent weeks, Environment Canada will continue to monitor the ozone. The World Ozone and Ultraviolet Radiation Data Centre will continue to deliver world-class services.

**Ms. Laurin Liu (Rivière-des-Mille-Îles, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, the minister might be tired of talking about his reckless cuts to ozone monitoring but there are expert scientists who would love to talk and who are being muzzled by the government.



We have a hole in the ozone twice the size of Ontario. We have increasing pollution, especially in the tar sands, and new evidence today shows that Conservatives have been planning to fail on the environment.

It is no wonder that the minister is so afraid to hear from scientists. Where is the government's plan for ozone monitoring?

**Hon. Peter Kent (Minister of the Environment, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, as we have said any number of times in recent days, Canadians should be proud of the positive and terrific contributions that our scientists at Environment Canada make to international studies, such as the report on the Arctic ozone hole.

We do not muzzle our scientists. Our scientists speak regularly with the media and are available to inform members of the opposition.

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### THE ECONOMY

**Mr. Patrick Brown (Barrie, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, our Conservative government is focused on what matters to Canadians, jobs and economic growth.

We are on the right track with Canada's economy growing in July and nearly 600,000 net new jobs created since July 2009. It is certainly an encouraging sign.

We all know the global economy's recovery is fragile, especially in the U.S. and in Europe. That is why we are working hard to implement the next phase of Canada's economic action plan.

Would the Minister of State for Finance please update the House on the implementation of the next phase of Canada's economic action plan?

**Hon. Ted Menzies (Minister of State (Finance), CPC):** Mr. Speaker, our government is moving forward with the next phase of our plan with the tabling of the second budget bill. This includes pro-job and pro-family items, such as the hiring credit for small business, extending key tax relief for the manufacturing sector, legislating a permanent \$2 billion gas tax fund for municipalities, new tax credits for volunteer firefighters and family caregivers, and a children's arts tax credit.

Most of all, we are forgiving loans for new doctors and nurses in underserved—

**The Speaker:** Order, please. The hon. member for Timmins—James Bay.

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### ETHICS

**Mr. Charlie Angus (Timmins—James Bay, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, we are now 117 days since the President of the Treasury Board started hiding under his desk.

I would like to ask him again about the Lake of Bays project and why he sent out a press release, which was under embargo, bragging about the \$4.5 million cheque that he was about to give to the council, even though the council told him that the plan had no viability, which meant that he had to hightail it out of town, chequebook in hand.

### Oral Questions

Now this would be funny if it did not show such a shocking disregard for the normal checks and balances of spending. Will the minister explain how he got his hands on money for a project that did not exist?

**Hon. John Baird (Minister of Foreign Affairs, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the member opposite mentions nothing new in his question.

What today does represent is 377 days since the member flip-flopped on the gun registry and still no apology to the people of Timmins—James Bay. I invite the member opposite to get on his feet right now and make that long overdue apology.

**Some hon. members:** Oh, oh!

**The Speaker:** Order, please. The hon. member for Timmins—James Bay.

**Mr. Charlie Angus (Timmins—James Bay, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I understand why the Minister of Foreign Affairs is changing the channel. It is because the guy beside him is a big political liability. Perhaps he will explain.

Where was he when the rules were being broken by the Muskoka minister? Where was he when the Auditor General was being misled? Was he driving shotgun around the back woods while the Muskoka minister had a \$4.5 million cheque to give out to a project that did not exist?

Does he believe that the rules apply to everybody else except for that minister and the government?

**Hon. John Baird (Minister of Foreign Affairs, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I can assure the House that no project was ever funded that did not exist.

\* \* \*

• (1450)

[Translation]

### G8 SUMMIT

**Mr. Alexandre Boulerice (Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, it sounds as though the Minister of Foreign Affairs is going through customs: he has nothing to declare. I know why, because he was not present at the meetings where the scheme for the G8 summit was worked out. The Auditor General was unable to establish who approved the budget for the G8 slush fund. However, in the documents we obtained, the minister clearly told the mayor that the budget would be determined by the Prime Minister's Office.

If the Prime Minister's Office did not determine this budget, can the minister rise and explain his email?

[English]

**Hon. John Baird (Minister of Foreign Affairs, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the Auditor General released a report some time ago, a copy of which certainly made its way to the Canadian voters before election day. There is nothing new in this question. The Auditor General came forward and made a number of observations on how we could do an even better job and be more transparent to Parliament. We fully accept those recommendations.

### Oral Questions

What happened was that 32 projects were funded and all 32 of them came in on or under budget. All 32 projects were also supporting public infrastructure in the province of Ontario.

[Translation]

**Mr. Alexandre Boulerice (Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, as usual, the Minister of Foreign Affairs is putting on a good show. However, what Canadians want is transparency and the truth. It was not this minister who wrote those emails. He did not attend the meetings. And, contrary to what the Minister of Foreign Affairs claims, the President of the Treasury Board told the mayor that the Prime Minister's Office would determine the budget. He even wrote that.

Is that why the minister is not allowed to answer the questions? Is it because he revealed that the Prime Minister's office was involved in the scandal.

[English]

**Hon. John Baird (Minister of Foreign Affairs, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, 32 projects were supported by Infrastructure Canada to support job creation and economic growth. They all came in on or under budget. There were 32 different contribution agreements for each of those projects that I approved. All of those projects provide good benefit to taxpayers now and will in the many years to come.

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### NATIONAL DEFENCE

**Hon. John McKay (Scarborough—Guildwood, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, last week, the Minister of National Defence and I, along with others, attended a conference put on by the military called "Caring for our Own". One of the concerns raised by some of the soldiers was the fear that the military would not be there for them in their hour of need. Specific worries included PTSD, suicide ideation and suicide itself.

The next budget will be under severe pressure for cutting these "soft services". Could the minister give the House assurances that our vulnerable soldiers and their families will be protected from these budgetary pressures?

**Hon. Peter MacKay (Minister of National Defence, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, my colleague is correct. My friend was in attendance, along with many members who are specifically tasked with how we deal with the scourge of post-traumatic stress and many of the challenges related to overseas deployments.

I am very pleased to report that Canada has in fact become a world leader in fighting the stigmatization and raising awareness of post-traumatic stress disorder and other operational stress injuries. As well, we have increased mental health awareness and we have increased the number of mental health professionals who are dealing specifically with these challenges.

\* \* \*

### VETERANS AFFAIRS

**Mr. Sean Casey (Charlottetown, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, there is a great need to enhance suicide prevention programs in Canada. With respect to our veterans, the data is alarming. The suicide rate in the armed services is nearly three times that of the general population.

According to a departmental study of all males who enrolled in the regular forces after 1972 and were released before 2007, a total of 2,620 died and almost 700 of them were suicides.

Could the minister outline new steps or strategies that his department is undertaking to tackle this crisis among veterans?

[Translation]

**Hon. Steven Blaney (Minister of Veterans Affairs, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for his important question.

[English]

While mental health was taboo then, it is a priority for our government now. That is why we have established, in conjunction with the Department of National Defence, 17 operational stress injury clinics that provide services to veterans suffering from post-traumatic stress across the country and at various levels that they might experience.

This approach is working. As of June, Veterans Affairs Canada is helping more than 14,300 veterans with mental health conditions and their families, and—

**The Speaker:** Order. The hon. member for Surrey North.

\* \* \*

### ROYAL CANADIAN MOUNTED POLICE

**Mr. Jasbir Sandhu (Surrey North, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, the Province of British Columbia and its municipalities have pleaded with the government to come back to the table and negotiate a new RCMP contract in good faith. They are ready and willing to break the impasse, but the government would rather play hardball with the provinces and use our front-line officers as bargaining chips.

Why is the government callously playing fast and loose with the safety of British Columbians and why will the Public Safety minister not immediately meet with the B.C. government and move the discussions forward?

• (1455)

**Hon. Vic Toews (Minister of Public Safety, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, as you are well aware, there have been four years of intensive negotiations. Our government is willing to renew contract policing agreements with the provinces, and in fact I am awaiting the suggestions that the B.C. Solicitor General indicated that she would forward to my attention. To date I have not received that. She indicated on September 9 that she would be forwarding those suggestions. I have not heard from her.

**Mr. Randall Garrison (Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, the government cannot seem to get its story straight on this file. First the minister says there is a deadline and no more negotiations. Then on Friday, the member for Port Moody—Westwood—Port Coquitlam, speaking as the cabinet minister in B.C., told B.C. municipalities he was sure the government would strike a deal on the new RCMP contract.



Which is it? Are the government members going to meet and negotiate, or are they going to complain that no one has told them what the issues are?

Will the Conservatives stop trying to play good cop, bad cop and sit down and negotiate seriously with British Columbia so that front-line RCMP officers can focus on their real work, which is keeping our communities safe?

**Hon. Vic Toews (Minister of Public Safety, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, it is quite surprising to hear the NDP members talking about keeping our communities safe when they have consistently voted against every single measure that would keep dangerous repeat offenders in prison. It is a shame that they would have the audacity to stand in the House and accuse this government, after all of the work that we have done to repair the damage that was done by the Liberals, for failing to train appropriate numbers of RCMP officers.

\* \* \*

### FOREIGN AFFAIRS

**Mr. Kevin Sorenson (Crowfoot, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the killing continues in Syria and the Assad regime continues its slide into isolation.

The United Nations Security Council is meeting today to consider a resolution against Syria. Media reports indicate that it could be weakened. It may be blocked or even vetoed.

Could the Foreign Affairs minister please tell the House what Canada is doing to support the Syrian people and to ensure that we keep up pressure on the illegitimate Assad regime?

**Hon. John Baird (Minister of Foreign Affairs, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, Canada is concerned about the ever-deteriorating situation in Syria and the plight of Syrian civilians. We will not wait for the United Nations to act. I am pleased to announce that we have expanded sanctions against the Syrian regime and its backers even further.

We will do our part to ensure that the full weight of the world is brought to bear on Assad and those who support him. We stand by the Syrian people in their hour of struggle.

\* \* \*

### HEALTH

**Hon. Hedy Fry (Vancouver Centre, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, suicide is the third-highest cause of death among adult men in Canada. Every day 10 Canadians take their own lives, and for every one suicide there are 100 attempts, with 23,000 hospitalizations a year. These high rates of mortality and morbidity surrounding suicidal behaviour constitute a major public health crisis.

Since the federal government has already established national strategies in other critical areas such as cancer, does it not agree that suicide demands a similar multi-jurisdictional approach?

**Hon. Leona Aglukkaq (Minister of Health and Minister of the Canadian Northern Economic Development Agency, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, as I have stated, we have made an investment in establishing the Mental Health Commission of Canada since we formed government. At the same time, we have made significant investments through the Canadian Institutes of Health Research to

address mental health illness, recognizing that there is not one answer to address suicide.

Our government has made a number of investments, as I outlined in my earlier response, but many of these initiatives are in addition to what we invest in supporting provinces and territories in delivering their health care. This is a collective effort that will continue.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

### OFFICIAL LANGUAGES

**Ms. Charmaine Borg (Terrebonne—Blainville, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, a woman in my riding is dying from cancer while waiting for access to health insurance. To help her get access, we had to communicate with the department's consular affairs office, but it was impossible to get service in French. Yet the rules are clear, and I quote, "Ministers' offices...must have the capacity to communicate...in both official languages."

Does this government respect our country's bilingualism and its obligation to provide services to its citizens, whatever their language?

• (1500)

[English]

**Hon. Leona Aglukkaq (Minister of Health and Minister of the Canadian Northern Economic Development Agency, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, as the member should know, provinces and territories do deliver health care to their populations.

Our government provides support through the Canada Health Act and transfers to jurisdictions, as I have stated many times, but we have also made significant investments in the area of cancer prevention throughout Canada. We have renewed funding for the cancer partnerships across Canada.

\* \* \*

### INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION

**Mrs. Tilly O'Neill Gordon (Miramichi, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the G20 research group at the University of Toronto's Munk School of Global Affairs recently released its annual analysis of G20 commitments. The report tracks G8 and G20 members' progress in meeting their promises from the November 2010 Seoul summit until June 2011.

Could the hon. Minister of International Cooperation please update the House on Canada's progress?

**Hon. Bev Oda (Minister of International Cooperation, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister has said that it is not enough to make pledges at conferences: it is important to pay what is pledged. Under his leadership, Canada met its 2009 food security commitment, and in fact was the first G8 country to do so. That is why he was asked to co-chair the UN commission for accountability in women's and children's health.

### *Business of Supply*

The Munk School report says that Canada has fully complied with its official development assistance commitments. In fact, in meeting the G20 commitments, Canada ranked ahead of the U.K., the U.S.A.—

**The Speaker:** Order, please.

The hon. member for British Columbia Southern Interior.

\* \* \*

### TAXATION

**Mr. Alex Atamanenko (British Columbia Southern Interior, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, thousands of law-abiding Canadians are being made to feel like criminals by the U.S. IRS. The Minister of Finance and the Prime Minister have received a letter from a constituent in my riding. His wife has been working and paying taxes in Canada since 1968 and has only had a Canadian passport. The U.S. government has informed her that she owes the IRS \$70,000 in penalties for failing to file her forms.

I thank the minister for his public stance against this assault on Canadian citizens. Will he now outline what specific measures he has taken to protect the life savings of this couple and others from the U.S. government's cash grab?

**Hon. Ted Menzies (Minister of State (Finance), CPC):** Mr. Speaker, we share the hon. member's concerns. It is absolutely unfair when hard-working, law-abiding Canadian citizens have misunderstood a U.S. law.

These are not high rollers. They are not avoiding taxes. We have called on the U.S. government to look upon these individuals with leniency and we have stressed that we will not, under our Canadian revenue agency, be collecting any of these supposed penalties.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

### THE ENVIRONMENT

**Mrs. Maria Mourani (Ahuntsic, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, the report by the Commissioner of the Environment and Sustainable Development is crystal clear: the Conservatives' so-called environmental plan will not enable Canada to meet its targets. And this situation is unlikely to change considering the mediocre data, which are insufficient to even assess the government's expenditures and efforts, combined with the elimination of environmental programs and the cuts to Environment Canada.

Why is the Minister of the Environment still trying to convince people how serious his government is, when we know that the only thing the Conservatives have reduced is their own greenhouse gas reduction targets—by 90%?

[English]

**Hon. Peter Kent (Minister of the Environment, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, again I lament the fact that the opposition will not recognize the positive remarks by the Auditor General's Commissioner of the Environment, but I must say that I was delighted that he acknowledged our international and national commitments to both Copenhagen and Cancun and our commitment to achieving a 17% reduction from 2005 base levels of greenhouse gases by 2020.

Our government was elected to protect both the environment and the economy, and that is what it is doing.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

### PRESENCE IN THE GALLERY

**The Speaker:** I would like to draw to the attention of hon. members the presence in the gallery of His Excellency Nassirou Bako-Arifari, Minister of Foreign Affairs, African Integration, Francophonie and the Beninese Abroad, of the Republic of Benin.

**Some hon. members:** Hear, hear!

• (1505)

[English]

**The Speaker:** I would also like to draw to the attention of hon. members the presence in the gallery of the Honourable Mike Olscamp, Minister of Agriculture, Aquaculture and Fisheries for New Brunswick.

**Some hon. members:** Hear, hear!

## GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[English]

### BUSINESS OF SUPPLY

#### OPPOSITION MOTION—NATIONAL SUICIDE PREVENTION STRATEGY

The House resumed consideration of the motion.

**Mr. Chris Alexander (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of National Defence, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I will be sharing my time with the hon. member for Northumberland—Quinte West.

I wish to thank the member for Toronto Centre for raising this important issue.

It is a particular pleasure to rise in the House to speak to this issue so soon after both the Minister of National Defence and the Minister of Veterans Affairs replied to questions concerning the relationship of our Canadian veterans and members of the Canadian Forces to this important issue.

Obviously, the member for Toronto Centre is right in saying that suicide is a terrible personal tragedy. When one person takes his or her life, it represents an untold loss of this country's potential. It is a blow to all of us. Suicide carries an especially heavy price for the loved ones left behind.

[Translation]

I can say that the issue of suicide prevention remains a priority for our government and, in particular, for Veterans Affairs. I would like to focus on certain departmental initiatives and share them with you.



[English]

The Department of Veterans Affairs is charged with caring for and supporting Canadian veterans and their families, as all members know. What members may not know is that it has made suicide prevention a central mission. The department has a suicide prevention strategy, which is an important element of a broader plan to address the mental health needs of Canada's veterans.

Veterans Affairs Canada in collaboration with the Department of National Defence now has a network of 17 mental health clinics throughout the country which provide specialized services to Canadian Forces members, veterans and RCMP members who suffer from operational stress injuries related to their service. We on this side of the House are proud to say that number has doubled under this government. Let me take a moment to talk about how the operational stress injury clinics work.

[Translation]

During treatment, veterans have periodic appointments at an operational stress injury clinic. In addition to a clinical assessment, clients are offered a variety of treatment options including individual therapies, group sessions, psychoeducation sessions and other resources.

[English]

While continuing to live in their community in other words, veterans attend appointments at the operational stress injury, OSI, clinic. They are offered a clinical assessment and a variety of treatment options. Their family members are invited to join them for these periods of treatment.

The teams are made up of psychiatrists, psychologists, social workers, mental health nurses, and other specialized clinicians who understand the experience and needs of veterans. Referral to other centres may be part of the treatment process, depending on the needs of the client, including any needs related to addiction or substance abuse.

As of today, there are 10 of these clinics operated by Veterans Affairs Canada. Nine are out-patient clinics in Fredericton, Quebec City, Montreal, Ottawa, London, Winnipeg, Calgary, Edmonton and Vancouver. Members from many of those cities have taken part in this debate. The tenth clinic is the in-patient residential treatment clinic for operational stress injuries at Ste. Anne's Hospital, the famous Veterans Affairs institution in Sainte-Anne-de-Bellevue on the island of Montreal. It was built by the Borden government in 1917 and remains a critical element of this network today.

Telehealth services help ensure that veterans are provided with easier access to emotional support when they need it. Coast-to-coast support is available to help these brave men and women overcome the challenges of complex mental health injuries that could lead to suicide if they are not dealt with properly.

We are pleased to report that 4,200 veterans have received help through those 10 clinics. The Canadian Forces offer similar support through its seven operational trauma and stress support centres. As I mentioned earlier, that makes a total of 17 institutions.

In 2006 the veterans charter introduced a full package of programs and benefits to support modern-day veterans. These include

### *Business of Supply*

rehabilitation supports, practical help in finding a job, and health benefits. They are all delivered on a case management basis.

Today there are more services and programs available than ever before to support Canadian veterans. There are more front-line health specialists than ever before. There are integrated personnel support centres located on 24 bases and wings to give staff from both departments, working hand-in-hand, a chance to offer early intervention and support.

Working side by side the front-line employees across government develop personalized care plans for each individual veteran. They have also created a very successful peer support network, the operational stress injury social support program. Specially trained peer support counsellors with first-hand experience of operational stress injuries and the loss of loved ones provide vital personal care and support.

I am proud to say that over 5,000 veterans are now part of these networks. Counselling and referral services are available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week through a crisis hotline. More than 2,000 mental health providers are registered in communities across the country to provide professional counselling services to veterans in their own cities and towns.

The services available in principle are substantial, but as the Prime Minister said in question period, there is always room for improvement. That is just what the Department of National Defence and the Department of Veterans Affairs are aiming to achieve.

Pastoral outreach services with a network of over 200 chaplains offer spiritual guidance for those in need.

From this summary, I think it is clear that this government takes the mental health of Canada's veterans seriously.

But even the death of one veteran, Canadian Forces member or family member by suicide is one too many. That is why employees have been given suicide awareness and intervention training on a larger and larger scale in recent years, to help them become part of the early warning network that sees these problems coming earlier. I am happy to report that Veterans Affairs is better equipped than ever before to support at-risk veterans and their families.

Moreover, to address a specific aspect of the motion put forward by the member for Toronto Centre, Veterans Affairs and National Defence have jointly commissioned the Canadian Forces mortality report. The results of this study will allow all of us to better understand what conditions pose a suicide risk so that we can create better solutions and understand better what care is required to meet the needs of those at risk.

This is groundbreaking research; never before has it been done in Canada. It will help us develop an evidence-based approach to the prevention of suicide within the Canadian Forces, among veterans and in society at large.

### *Business of Supply*

All of these measures are part of the department's overall mental health strategy. It is the most comprehensive mental health care and support effort in the department's history, and the approach is working. In total, more than 14,000 veterans living with mental health conditions receive assistance and support in some form or another.

• (1510)

We can only hope there will be support on all sides of the House, for our soldiers, for our men and women in uniform and for veterans, for those efforts to be expanded, deepened and extended in years to come.

[Translation]

I also have some personal experience with the issue of suicide. When I was a student in Montreal, decades ago now, I volunteered at an NGO called Suicide Action Montréal. We took calls from men and women, often young but sometimes elderly, who were thinking about committing suicide. The calls came mostly at night, but during the day as well, from across Montreal and the greater Montreal area. Some of the callers, the vast majority of those served by this NGO, had already attempted suicide.

I can tell the House that the primary obligation Canadians have regarding suicide is to help find solutions. Each of us must contribute. The most important thing anyone can do for someone who is considering suicide is to listen, to understand where this upsetting emotion is coming from, where this irrational desire to take their own life is coming from. A solution can often be found by connecting on an individual level with the person.

I think that we all need to work on this issue in the long term and keep in mind the often invisible needs of our friends, our colleagues and other members of our communities.

• (1515)

[English]

Very few of us in the chamber have experienced war and armed conflict first-hand. It does exact a price not just in terms of lost limbs and lost lives, but in terms of what many veterans of this country's armed services and those of other countries carry with them invisibly for decades to come. Rest assured that this government is taking action to ensure the brave men and women who serve this country get the help and support they need.

**Mr. Sean Casey (Charlottetown, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, my question for the hon. member relates to the effectiveness of the programs in place. I appreciate his listing the services that are available, but in an environment where there have been 696 suicides by members of the armed forces who have served between 1972 and 2007, clearly there is a problem. Veterans tell me that yes, there are services, but there are not enough.

I appreciate his candid comment that we can do more. My question is a repetition of the question I asked the minister in question period. Are there new strategies and programs, or alternatively, is this a case where the government will commit further resources to the excellent programs the member has outlined and ensure that these programs do not come under the austerity knife?

**Mr. Chris Alexander:** Mr. Speaker, the question of deficit reduction and measures this government will be taking to meet its goals in that field is a separate one. Let me reassure the member opposite that many of the resources mentioned, both on the veterans affairs side and the national defence side, are new resources, new institutions. New resources are being committed and these institutions in many cases are still being built as we speak.

Moreover, it is beyond any question that the services to meet the needs of men and women in uniform and returning veterans are not yet being used by all who really ought to be using them. It is a question of knowledge, familiarity, sensibilisation, as we say in French. That job will continue. This debate today will help us to raise the profile of this issue and to bring awareness of these services to an even larger group.

I can assure the member that yes, the resources have been increased and are being increased. The bigger challenge is to make sure all of our men and women in uniform and veterans do not succumb to this stigma, but instead know that the right thing to do is to contact the professionals to get the necessary support early, as they start to experience the trauma and anxiety that could lead to suicide.

• (1520)

**Ms. Linda Duncan (Edmonton—Strathcona, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, as the member was elected in the province of Ontario, presumably he would be aware of an equally large problem regarding suicide, that being within first nations communities.

If he has not appraised himself of the recent coroner's report prepared by Justice Goudge, I would recommend that he discuss that with his colleagues.

In June of this year, Justice Goudge stated in a coroner's report that Pikangikum is an impoverished, isolated first nations community where basic necessities of life are absent. It has experienced 16 suicides in a two-year period. He also made reference to the fact that was the most severe case of suicide in that area of the country.

Would the hon. member speak to the broader issues faced by the communities in his own province? Should the government act on the recommendations of the coroner dealing with poor health services, lack of safe drinking water, no connection to an electricity grid, high unemployment, significant reliance on social services, overcrowded housing and abysmal health services?

**Mr. Chris Alexander:** Mr. Speaker, I am very much aware of Justice Goudge's report. I had the pleasure of knowing Mr. Justice Goudge at an earlier stage when he was a leading member of his profession in Toronto.

It is an important report that points to perhaps the most critical area requiring further action to prevent suicide. It addresses what has become an epidemic in some communities.

The Minister of Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development has outlined a huge array of initiatives that the government is taking. The minister is wise enough to know, as we all do, that no one program will end this problem overnight.

We need to study what is working well and what is not as well as determine where we can make a difference with greater or reinforced investments—



*Business of Supply*

**The Speaker:** I will stop the hon. member there as his time has expired.

The hon. member for Northumberland—Quinte West.

**Mr. Rick Norlock (Northumberland—Quinte West, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I rise in the House today to pay tribute to the many families across Canada, and specifically in the north, who have dealt with the sorrow of losing a loved one to suicide. We recognize that differences in economic circumstances, education, living conditions and physical environment can prevent a proportion of our population from achieving optimum mental health and well-being. This includes children, youth, and families living in the north's remote and rural communities.

Investing in positive mental health is an important step in promoting good health and preventing illness. That is why the government is taking action to help aboriginal children and their families in Canada's north address the tragic issue of youth suicide.

The government is funding programs that build their strength on protective factors such as ensuring family and community support. The national aboriginal youth suicide prevention strategy, the interdepartmental family violence initiative and the building healthy communities initiatives are examples of mental health promotion programs the government is funding to support Inuit and first nations populations in Canada's three northern territories.

Canada's north comprises a vast geography which presents unique conditions and challenges not seen in the south. Nunavut alone, with a population of 33,000, makes up 20% of Canada's land mass and contains 25 communities accessible only by airplane. It also has Canada's youngest and fastest growing population.

The hon. Minister of Finance tabled a budget in the House last year which included nearly \$1 billion in investments for aboriginal people. This included \$285 million for aboriginal health programs including funding to continue the national aboriginal youth suicide prevention strategy until the year 2015.

In the three territories, the national aboriginal youth suicide prevention strategy has provided close to \$4 million over four years to support community-based solutions focused on resilience, embracing and celebrating life, and creating supportive environments.

I am pleased that the Government of Nunavut has also used funds from this initiative to help the Nunavut suicide prevention action plan and has committed to use the federal national aboriginal youth prevention strategy to implement that plan.

The government, along with the provinces, territories and community groups, is working to find better ways to promote mental health among Canadians. Differences in economic circumstances, education, living conditions and the physical environment can prevent a proportion of our population from achieving optimum mental health and well-being. This includes children, youth, and families living in the north's remote and rural communities. That is why earlier this spring the government announced funding for innovative community-based projects to improve the mental health of Canadian children, youth and families across the country through the Public Health Agency of Canada's innovation strategy. As part of this announcement, the government provided \$2.4 million over five

years to the Qaujigiartit Health Research Centre in Iqaluit, Nunavut to help address needs identified by northerners, to ensure good mental health and physical health for aboriginal children and youth in their communities.

As we work with this generation of youth to build their future, we must at the same time continue our recognition of the legacy of Indian residential schools and the intergenerational impact that experience is having throughout northern families and communities.

The government understands the significance of building healthy communities. As such, investing in health-promoting activities aimed at maintaining and improving the well-being of our aboriginal people in the territories is also a key priority. Research has clearly shown the importance of giving children a positive and early start to education. In the territories, with its young population experiencing rapid change, this is ever so crucial in building a healthy next generation.

• (1525)

The aboriginal head start program in urban and northern communities does just that by addressing the needs of high-risk children and their families. It is creating a supportive and culturally based early learning environment in 19 territorial communities focused on language, school readiness, health promotion, parental involvement, nutrition and social support.

Our government is committed to continuing to help ensure that the north is a safe, healthy and prosperous place to live.

[Translation]

**Ms. Marjolaine Boutin-Sweet (Hochelaga, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, if the mental health of first nations is so important to the Conservative government, why was nearly \$500,000 cut from the Wapikoni project, which helps youth who are often at risk of committing suicide? Mental health is a very important aspect of this project. Why was funding slashed?

[English]

**Mr. Rick Norlock:** Mr. Speaker, I do not know the specific circumstances to which the member refers. However, had she listened to my speech she would have heard that literally tens of millions of dollars went to individual communities right across this country.

As a former police officer who has worked in the north of Ontario, especially northeastern Ontario and along the James Bay and Hudson Bay coast, I can say that both provincial and federal governments continue to work hard to address the situation of suicide and particularly among our youth.

As I mentioned, the north has some unique circumstances. There are communities located literally hundreds of miles away from the closest road. There are no mines, no forest industry and no opportunities for employment. The struggle is how to encourage employment. How do we create jobs and an economic atmosphere for those communities to enjoy the same kind of lifestyle as those further south that are close to highways and the like?

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Inasmuch as the member has referred to some programs that may have been cut, in addition there are many programs that have been created that are addressing not only the circumstances of suicide regarding the young but in communities also.

From a family perspective I can say that I am aware of and understand some of the circumstances mentioned by one of the previous questioners regarding the living conditions in Pikangikum. They relate specifically to the isolation of that community vis-à-vis its closeness to employment opportunities and the tremendous challenges most northern communities have.

• (1530)

**Ms. Linda Duncan (Edmonton—Strathcona, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, the member in response to the question by my colleague made reference to the fact that many of the aboriginal communities are isolated and cannot access benefits from resource extraction. It has been the experience of first nation communities in this country that although they want to participate they have been excluded. I simply mention the Lubicon of Alberta.

I am advised by the people of Pikangikum that the government promised somewhere in the order of \$12 million to assist them. I think that fund ends sometime next year yet very little of that money has been forthcoming. It is one thing to do studies and another to make promises.

What will the government do to deliver on meeting the basic needs of housing, safe drinking water, access to medical services and so forth for that community and all other aboriginal communities in Canada?

**Mr. Rick Norlock:** Mr. Speaker, there are two ways to look at the glass: it is either half full or half empty.

We know that right now there are tremendous challenges in the north. Every person in this House would agree on that. However, what the member left out in part of her question is the fact that the government has invested hundreds of millions of dollars in literally hundreds of communities to improve fresh water and waste water disposal.

One could say that whatever we are doing is not enough. We always admit, both in government and our communities, whether we are dealing in clubs or social groups, that it appears as though there is never enough to completely eradicate some of the problems we have. However, this government has and continues to take action.

As I mentioned in my speech, we are talking about hundreds of millions of additional dollars that are going specifically toward health care in the area of mental health and especially suicide prevention. That is what I said. If the member was listening to the speech, she would have heard me say that there are additional millions of dollars being spent on the issue and we have to keep working at it.

We will keep working at it as a government, but we need to have a collaborative working approach as parliamentarians to address the problem. Pointing fingers and complaining about each other I do not think develops that. If she has some substantive suggestions with regard to the budget, we would listen.

**Hon. Irwin Cotler (Mount Royal, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I will be sharing my time with the member for Vancouver Quadra.

It is a shocking fact which almost defies belief that, as the United Nations pointed out in 2009, every year worldwide more human beings kill themselves than are killed in all wars, terrorist attacks and homicides combined. While the motion before us focuses on Canada, it is important to realize that suicide occurs in every country, on every continent, and exists in every religious and age group. It claims almost a million lives annually; yet, despite its existence from the dawn of human history, this global tragedy has yet to receive the attention, and even more important, the action it warrants.

Today as we meet, 10 Canadians will take their own lives. This is a per capita rate three times that of the United States itself, largely due to the staggering number of deaths among aboriginal Canadians.

As well, the member for Toronto Centre pointed this out earlier today.

[Translation]

Suicide is the leading cause of death for men aged 25 to 29 and 40 to 44, and for women aged 30 to 34. Furthermore, suicide is the second leading cause of death among youth between the ages of 10 and 24.

• (1535)

[English]

Indeed, the suicide rate for youth in Canada is the third highest in the industrialized world. As well, the suicide rate for first nations is shockingly five to seven times higher than non-first nations populations. This is horrific and painful data.

Moreover, suicide is not only the leading cause of death for aboriginal men aged 10 to 19, but the suicide rate for Inuit youth is among the highest in the world, 11 times the national average. Among the most disturbing and painful data available, according to a 2008 study done in Nunavut, nearly 43% of respondents had thoughts of suicide in the previous seven days.

As if these statistics are not troubling enough, let us appreciate that behind each statistic is a human being. I sometimes worry that the abstraction of statistics takes us away from appreciating the full depth of the tragedy in individual and collective terms. The reality is that death by suicide can be prevented.

As for the suicide of adolescents, what goes through a young person's mind before making such a terrible choice is not something one can fully appreciate. Studies indicate that issues of social integration, feelings of alienation, changes in family situations, problems with self-image as well as rage and self-control issues may all contribute to adolescent suicide.

A government report on teen suicide concluded the following.

[Translation]

While the reasons for suicide are complex and difficult to define, the experience of adolescence brings unique problems to this high-risk age group.



[English]

Indeed, no part of Canadian society is immune, though certain segments, as I mentioned, particularly the aboriginal peoples are specifically at risk, as well as youth, seniors, Canadians with disabilities, those who identify as a sexual minority, and members of the armed forces.

While the causes of suicide are complex, often involving biological, psychological, social, environmental and spiritual factors, in various forms of combinations, 90% of suicides have a diagnosable psychiatric illness. Tragically, these conditions often go undiagnosed. This is a problem that must be addressed, not only nationally, but internationally, as well.

Again, we are speaking of something that can be prevented. Indeed, a government report from 1990 concluded the following.

[Translation]

The complexity of the issue must not discourage community or government agency efforts to deal with [this] problem...

[English]

In short, I support this motion as a step in the right direction for combating suicide and hope it enjoys the full support of the House when it comes to a vote later today. There is no question here in Canada that what is needed is a national suicide prevention strategy.

Regrettably, in Canada, suicide prevention is fragmented, disconnected, often incoherent, and lacking in a national vision and strategy. The difficult question that arises, therefore, is, what should this vision be? What should this strategy entail?

The government need not reinvent the wheel here. Blueprints for a national strategy from organizations such as the Canadian Association for Suicide Prevention exist and can be used in planning the government's course of action. Indeed, this plan in particular serves as a model for suicide prevention strategies in several provinces and was recommended to the government in a 2006 Senate committee report.

Some of the many recommendations and goals of the CASP strategy included, and I am extrapolating for reasons of time and abbreviating, as well, with respect to the examples: developing a co-ordinated public awareness campaign; developing national forums on suicide, generally, as well as on specific target populations and specific issues. For example, just as when I was minister of justice, we had federal-provincial-territorial meetings of ministers of justice on specific issues. So, in order to highlight a particular issue, there could surely be a federal-provincial-territorial meeting of ministers of health focused on suicide, in particular.

The recommendations and goals of the CASP strategy also included: supporting and also enhancing the number of public and private institutions and volunteer organizations active in suicide prevention. Here the government could initiate a grant program for suicide awareness and prevention campaigns.

They also included: increasing the proportion of the public that values mental, physical, social, spiritual and holistic health. Here the government could create some sort of participation program focused on mental health.

### *Business of Supply*

They also included: supporting the development of specific strategies by and for Inuit, first nations, Métis and all aboriginal peoples; encouraging the development of specific strategies for gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender persons. Indeed, we have been witness to a troubling wave of teen suicides of gay and lesbian youth in the United States recently, reminding us that we need to work on diversity and acceptance initiatives, as well as anti-bullying strategies.

They also included: supporting the development and use of technology to reduce the lethality of a means for suicide. For example, firearm locks, carbon monoxide shut-off controls, bridge barriers, subway stop barriers, and strengthened medication containers.

Finally, they also concluded: developing a national crisis line network to connect existing crisis lines and websites to provide services, particularly where none exist; and developing and implementing support structures for families living with suicidal people, acknowledging their roles as caregivers and as contributing members of the care team.

In short, there is much that can be done. It is up to the government to act, so that it can be done.

Indeed, the 2006 Senate committee report I mentioned earlier made some 118 recommendations, from legislative changes, such as Criminal Code amendments, to broader recommendations about the delivery of health care services.

Indeed, it is unfortunate that its recommendation "That governments take immediate steps to address the shortage of mental health professionals who specialize in treating children and youth" has not, regrettably, been heeded, and child and youth mental health services continue to be significantly less resourced than physical health services, and service delivery remains fragmented at all levels.

Before closing, I would also like to mention, and this was not entirely the focus of the debate here today, the particular issue of suicide among the elderly. Let us not forget that there is a high rate of suicide among the very old, be it after the loss of a spouse or loved one, or when used as a means to end suffering from illness. This, too, must be addressed as part of a national strategy and vision.

Today is, in effect, a call to action, to fight the stigmas surrounding suicide and mental health, and to come together in common cause to address this issue. We know the statistics and we have plenty of tools at our disposal to act. What we must do, in fact, is to act, and act now, to prevent the preventable tragedies that may yet, and will, occur.

● (1540)

**Mr. Patrick Brown (Barrie, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for his eloquent speech on the importance of mental health and suicides.

*Business of Supply*

Earlier, his colleague, the Liberal Party member for St. Paul's, mentioned that Canada had a suicide rate three times that of the U.S. It is important to note that the information shared by the Liberal Party member is actually incorrect. We just pulled the stats from the CDC website in the U.S. and from Stats Canada and it is identical, actually. It is both 11 tragic deaths per 100,000. It is important that we do not use statistics in the House that are wrong. We hope we can ensure that is not a fallacy that is raised here.

Does the member have any specific suggestions as to how we could improve the formidable commitment that the government made with the Mental Health Commission and the funding that was quite historic in 2007?

**Hon. Irwin Cotler:** Mr. Speaker, initiatives such as the Mental Health Commission are welcome initiatives, but the whole burden of what we have been speaking to today is the need for a national vision and a national strategy to implement it, of which the Mental Health Commission initiative can play an important part.

That is why I sought to identify and, in an abbreviated way, recommend a series of such initiatives that have been recommended by the Canadian Association of Suicide Prevention, which referenced also the issue of mental health, as I did in my remarks.

However, that is but one component, and indeed, in respect of Bill C-10, the omnibus crime bill, that too needs to factor in those issues that may have fallout for suicide prevention in the context of its crime and punishment approach.

• (1545)

**Mr. Scott Andrews (Avalon, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, this is a very serious issue, as many families are affected by suicide.

I was wondering if the member for Mount Royal might like to explain or share the statistic, something that he knows, that quite often suicide results in murder-suicide, where a person not only commits suicide, but takes another person's life. Many families have succumbed to this.

I am wondering if the member is familiar with any stats on this type of suicide which takes another person's life as well.

**Hon. Irwin Cotler:** Mr. Speaker, I do not have particular data with regard to the issue of murder-suicide, though the phenomenon of course, as my colleague mentioned, does exist.

I do want to say something that has underpinned all my remarks today, and perhaps I am somewhat influenced by the fact that for me, being on the occasion of the Jewish high holy days, the overarching theme during this period is a question of reverence for life; indeed, the sanctity of human life.

This is what the entire debate is all about. This is what the proposal for a national strategy of suicide prevention is all about, the reverence for life, the sanctity of human life, and to prevent these tragedies, as best we can, from occurring.

**Ms. Joyce Murray (Vancouver Quadra, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to be part of this important debate today on preventing suicide and the need for a national suicide prevention strategy.

I congratulate the Liberal Party leader and member of Parliament for Toronto Centre for bringing this issue forward for a full day of debate. As he stated so clearly, this issue, which has been a taboo,

needs to be aired and discussed. We need to address the shame around suicide that has kept it hidden in a closet.

I also congratulate the Canadian Association for Suicide Prevention and other organizations that have been working so hard to raise awareness of the awful epidemic in our society.

We have heard from a number of members the statistics that show that we have a great problem with suicide in our country, particularly with first nations. I note in the *Globe and Mail* series on suicide that the rate in Nunavut of 15-year-old to 19-year-old men is 40 times the national average. That is completely unacceptable. It is a discredit to our nation in the eyes of the world that we have such a differential rate of suicide between our aboriginal communities and our non-aboriginal communities. It is to that issue that I will be dedicating my remarks today.

Clearly, we need a national suicide prevention strategy. In the province of Quebec, there has been a substantial drop in suicides as a result of its provincial strategy. We know that we can do better in this country.

I was pleased to hear some of the comments by the Conservative members about the actions that governments have taken over the years, but it has been a fragmented approach. The national mental health strategy has no suicide prevention component. There is no coherent vision. There is a disconnect between the national program and pilot projects and what is being done in our provinces and territories. We need an integrated partnership with leadership from the federal government.

There are so many factors behind the tragedy of suicide. There are also so many consequences for the families, friends and communities that experience this tragedy.

As the Liberal Party leader said, none of us are immune from experiencing the grief of suicide, not our families nor our social networks. I experienced that grief as a young woman when one of my closest women friends took her life. It was confusing, distressing and despairing for those of us who knew her that we had not been able to prevent that from happening. This is a humanitarian issue of the highest order and it is time that we grapple with it.

During question period today, the Prime Minister spoke of his government providing hope and opportunity to first nations communities. He talked about the economic opportunities. I do not see that, frankly. It is not reflected in the statistics. Many first nations communities have a woeful lack of activities for their young people. They lack educational success and economic opportunities.



I want to refer to a document put out by the provincial Government of British Columbia that talks about risk and protective factors. Among those factors are school factors. The predisposing factor for suicide among youth is a long-standing history of negative school experience or a lack of a meaningful connection to school. However, a protective factor is success at school. British Columbia has a far lower rate of graduation from schools in aboriginal communities as compared to schools outside of aboriginal reserves, and that needs to change.

● (1550)

Students who are on reserves are part of the federal responsibility and they are shorted the education dollars compared with what is provided by the provincial government off reserves. That needs to be addressed and it needs to change.

With respect to the risk and protective factors in the community, community marginalization and socio-economic deprivation are risk factors but protective factors, opportunities for youth, availability of resources and community control over local resources, are things that can be done.

As the minister of environment and parks in British Columbia, I had the opportunity to visit a number of remote, small aboriginal communities in order to find ways for those communities to connect with economic activities in the extensive B.C. parks system. I learned that these communities, which had once been thriving, self-sufficient, proud communities, were, in many cases, suffering from 80% or more unemployment. When there are no jobs and the young people are seeing no economic prospects, that feeds into the cycle of despair, a lack of motivation, of hope and of opportunity that has the young people drop out of school. That is still a very present concern and that has not been addressed in a systematic way through a strategy by the federal government.

I also want to note that a very important factor is activities and sports for young people. This is true for aboriginal and non-aboriginal alike. We know there are a number of groups that are more likely to not participate in sports and recreation and those are people from lower income families, people with disabilities, new Canadians and especially first nations. Activities, such as sports, are very important for aboriginal youth in remote and sometimes inaccessible communities. They need to have something to do after school and somewhere to go. They need to have productive activities so they can challenge themselves. They can do team sports or individual sports.

I would like to share a personal story on this level as well. I attended a barbecue in Vancouver for a friend who was celebrating a 65th birthday. Among the small group of family and friends was a group of aboriginal people, the chief, his wife and three children, and two councillors. They came from a remote, inaccessible northern community to the barbecue to celebrate my friend's birthday. When it came time to speak, the chief shared that his son had taken his own life and that among his family there had been a dozen young people who had taken their lives over the previous decade and a half. However, that had changed and that had changed because that community, in partnership with my friend's initiative, had begun to take some of the resources in their area, take ownership and create

jobs, create an enterprise using the local resources. That led to a flow of funding into their community.

When the chief asked the young people what they needed, in the despair of the suicide in that community, and what could be done with the funds flowing into the community due to the enterprise, the answer was that they need a recreation centre and they really wanted a pool. The chief came to Vancouver to testify his personal experience that, since the centre was built and the swimming pool was put into their community, there had not been a single suicide. It was a very moving story and very illustrative of what can be done. Are we doing that in Canada?

● (1555)

We have a sport tax credit that, unfortunately, cuts out those very people. If they do not pay income tax, they do not get access to that sport tax credit.

I appeal to the Government of Canada to do more on the economic front and on the recreation facility front, especially for first nations.

**Mr. John Rafferty (Thunder Bay—Rainy River, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I listened with interest to my hon. friend's comments.

One of the things that struck me, because she was talking about a national suicide prevention strategy and the difficulties in getting the government to commit to such a thing, I was recalling that this has been on the table for a number of governments in the past and there is still no action on it.

I was wondering if the hon. member would have some insight into why governments are so reluctant to simply declare that it will develop a national suicide prevention strategy, that it will work with all Canadians and that it will find some answers?

**Ms. Joyce Murray:** Mr. Speaker, I think what we are seeing today is an accumulation of clarity about the need for a national suicide prevention strategy.

We have groups coming together and coming to Ottawa. We have a conference in Vancouver this week on the issue. We have the Liberal Party of Canada putting this forward as an opposition day motion so that the issues can be heard, aired and debated, and awareness raised among parliamentarians.

The time is now. I encourage the government to say yes today to a commitment to a national suicide prevention strategy.

**Mr. Chris Alexander (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of National Defence, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the motion today does relate to a strategy, and we all agree that a strategy in this area is needed and it would be good, but would the member not agree that a strategy alone will not get us very far? Would she not agree that we need to focus this debate and our action together as much as possible on the sorts of concrete initiatives, institutional initiatives, outreach initiatives, training initiatives and public health initiatives that will actually reach the people in need, both in aboriginal communities and in other communities that are affected as well.

### *Business of Supply*

My own speech a few minutes ago was on the needs of veterans and members of the Canadian Forces. There are some very specific things that have been done. They are not working as well as we would like but they are starting to work.

Could the member tell us what specific institutional enhancements she thinks would make the greatest difference?

• (1600)

**Ms. Joyce Murray:** Mr. Speaker, of course, a proper strategy, as I am sure the member opposite would agree, has clear, specific, actionable items. It has measures, timeframes and mechanisms for monitoring. A strategy is not just words. It is a clear intention and has ways to ensure progress is being made.

I have already given one specific example, which is the sports tax credit that is being doubled by the government but cuts out the very people who need it. Those who have a low income and who are not paying taxes do not benefit from the \$200 million toward sports activities. Why would the government do that?

As for the large profitable corporations that will be receiving billions in additional tax breaks, the corporations that do not create net new jobs, the government should not do that next tax break. It should use those funds for a national suicide prevention strategy, for job training, for apprenticeships, for skills training and for the activities that would be needed in the minister of state's portfolio and others.

**Mr. John Rafferty (Thunder Bay—Rainy River, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I will be sharing my time with my friend from Halifax.

It is with sadness that I rise today to speak on this issue. I come from a part of the country in northern Ontario where these sorts of headlines about suicide are in the paper almost every day. It is easy, I think, if one lives in a large centre to not have this issue as part of one's daily life, but it is part of everyone's daily life in regions like northern Ontario. However, it does not mean that people are not doing anything about it.

I would like to talk about some of the solutions that have come from northwestern Ontario. I will speak about aboriginal people, both on reserve and off reserve. I will begin with off reserve.

We have a unique situation in Thunder Bay in that we have a first nations high school. It is called Dennis Franklin Cromarty High School. It is a very interesting high school, and a perfect place to do an extensive survey as to what could be done to help solve this problem.

I would like to reference the Regional Multicultural Youth Council of Thunder Bay. Moffat Makuto is the youth adviser. We have been in touch for a number of years on this and other issues. We brought it to the attention to the minister in the last Parliament, but nothing has been done again. I have another letter from him today, and I would like to quote a couple of comments that he makes.

He talks about Reggie Bushie, a student who passed away in Thunder Bay and who went to Dennis Franklin Cromarty High School. He said there is a concern that the inquest is taking too long to begin, because two more students from northern reserves attending Dennis Franklin Cromarty High School in the city have

since died under similar circumstances. In fact, the media are characterizing them as mysterious circumstances.

This is a quote from Mr. Makuto's letter to me. He says:

We must work with aboriginal students and empower them to make a difference. But, our Youth Council lacks funding to create more peer leaders and role models at DFC. This is an effective way of connecting with aboriginal students to counter the aggressive criminal gang recruitment among school drop-outs across the region.

The Regional Multicultural Youth Council, in conjunction with the Multicultural Association of Northwestern Ontario, did a survey in March of this year. I do not want to go through the whole piece, but if anyone is interested in getting a copy, I would be more than happy to make sure they get one.

There are three recommendations for the federal government, and I would like to mention them briefly.

The first recommendation is:

Dennis Franklin Cromarty High School, the Northern Nishnawbe Education Council, Nishnawbe Aski Nation, the Ontario Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs, and Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada should work with other government ministries and stakeholders to secure funding for a students' residence at DFC, ensure that it is adequately staffed with essential programs, services and supports to guarantee their safety, enhance their well-being, improve their educational performance and increase graduation rates.

The second recommendation is that:

...the Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada, should provide financial resources to create, support and sustain aboriginal peer leaders at DFC who can work with other students to organize activities that reduce risk factors, enhance their safety, improve graduation rates, counter negative lifestyles, and avoid involvement in criminal youth gangs.

Keep in mind that this is from students in their own words.

The third recommendation calls on the government to provide adequate funding for students to meet realistic costs and cover the needs of on-reserve and boarding students, addressing this inequity to match the provincial level of funding per student.

We know that for students at this particular high school, the aboriginal student gets about \$2,000 less than what the equivalent student gets in the Province of Ontario.

I would like to thank the Regional Multicultural Youth Council and Moffat Makuto for their work on this.

I will briefly speak about Pikangikum in the time I have left.

• (1605)

Suicide is an invisible problem in Canada and it is an invisible epidemic among first nations youth. We have known for years that it is our collective failing that we, as political leaders, have not addressed this. It will continue to be our collective failing if we do not address it now, and I thank my friend from Toronto Centre for bringing this motion forward today.



*Business of Supply*

The public safety of first nations youth on and off reserves must be a priority of the federal government. Suicide, particularly suicide among first nations youth, is not a partisan issue but a national crisis.

I asked a question in question period on September 23, about a week and a half ago, which I would like to read again. I stated:

Mr. Speaker, my constituents in Thunder Bay are agonizing over the unexplained deaths of seven first nations students in seven years. One week ago, on Pikangikum First Nation a sixth young man this summer took his own life.

Then I asked the minister if he had read the Ontario chief coroner's report on these suicides, when he would act on its recommendations, and what he is doing to make life safer and brighter for first nations youth on and off reserves.

He stated in part in his response, "We will do everything we can to address the situation". I thank the minister for his answer, but I would like to provide a bit of a historical perspective to what has happened in Pikangikum in the past and what is continuing to happen.

A November 1999 report co-authored by Samson for Survival International, a U.K.-based watchdog, called for immediate Government of Canada action after it found the Innu suicide rate to be 178 per 100,000 people from the 1970s to the 1990s. It is the highest-documented rate in the world.

Then we have Pikangikum, a community of a couple of thousand people in the far north of Ontario, 300 kilometres northeast of Winnipeg. It has an eight-year average of 213 suicides per 100,000 people, a nine-year average of 205 per 100,000 people, and the latest Pikangikum suicides have sent this year's rate soaring to 470 deaths per 100,000 people.

The problem, while it is worst in Pikangikum, is region-wide and countrywide.

The report in 2000 also said that the increase in female suicide is related to third world conditions now prevalent on Canadian reserves like Pikangikum. Grand Chief Stan Beardy of the Nishnawbe Aski Nation said in the year 2000, "In all my dealings with the Canadian government over the last seven years, I've been met with a stony silence". Mr. Speaker, I would put it to you that he is still being met by a stony silence.

It is important to remind people of our history. This motion is a statement and a step that should have come from the federal government. It is still a step forward today, but only if we act on it.

In the time remaining, let me talk about some of the recommendations from the report.

First, the Department of Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Affairs should fulfill its commitment to build a new school in Pikangikum as soon as possible.

Second, the government should be a stakeholder in the housing strategic study.

Third, the government and the Pikangikum Housing Authority should ensure that all homes built in the future are connected to water and indoor plumbing, something the rest of us take for granted.

Fourth, the government and Pikangikum First Nation should complete its earlier project to connect the first nation to the hydro grid.

Fifth, the Government of Canada should support the Pikangikum First Nation's Whitefeather Forest project.

● (1610)

Sixth, Pikangikum First Nation should develop a community healing treatment centre with funding from the Health Canada Inuit and first nations health branch.

The seventh is the last one I will talk about, although there are more. It is that the Pikangikum health authority should develop a comprehensive mental health and addictions program for children, youth and adults.

**Mr. Charlie Angus (Timmins—James Bay, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I listened with great interest to the speech of my hon. colleague. The suicide epidemics in his region and my region are an international horror story.

I flew into Moose Factory Island, a wonderful island of great people, to be told that they had 13 youth suicides and 80 attempts, meaning that 93 children attempted or succeeded in killing themselves in one year in the town of Moose Factory alone.

At the time the province was shutting down the Payukotayno child welfare services because it said it was in debt. We saw people in absolute shock.

I see this in community after community, and I would like to ask the hon. member what came out of Pikangikum, because it said specifically that children do not even have access to schools. Children are killing themselves because the government will not even bother to build grade schools for them.

I ask my hon. colleague, given that the communities he represents are like mine because children are starving to have basic rights that other children enjoy as a given, why is it, in a country as rich as Canada, that we have a government that thinks building schools is not something it should even be responsible for?

**Mr. John Rafferty:** Mr. Speaker, that is an important question. My background is in education and as an educator. In fact, I was principal of a high school with a large percentage of aboriginal students, so I have a particular interest in schooling, and I thank the member for that question.

Schools provide a centre for students, a centre for learning and for after-school activities, but more importantly, schools offer an acknowledgement that people care about the students who attend that school and care about the community.

The fact that Pikangikum still does not have a school after so many years of promises is a travesty. It needs an auditorium. It needs a playground. It needs soccer fields. It needs all these sorts of things as just one small key to ending this problem.

*Business of Supply*

**Mr. Peter Stoffer (Sackville—Eastern Shore, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, 58,000 men and women died in the Vietnam War. The memorial in the United States shows all the names of those who died in Vietnam. What it does not say is that 120,000 returning soldiers from Vietnam killed themselves in the intervening 40 years. How many people actually died in Vietnam? It is more than just 58,000.

It is a tragedy when people who serve their country end up taking their own lives for whatever reason.

In talking to many veterans across this country, I found frustration, and I am sure aboriginal communities feel the same way about the bureaucratic delay. I am not blaming anyone for the bureaucratic delays in processing veterans' claims, but veterans I know of committed suicide because they just felt that nobody was listening, that nobody would help them, and they felt they had no other way out.

When we notice someone has a problem, could the hon. member suggest to the government and to all of us how quickly we should be acting in order to assist them and their families?

• (1615)

**Mr. John Rafferty:** Mr. Speaker, I was not aware of those figures from the Vietnam War and those who returned. That is an enormous number. It is also reflective of what is happening now, and not just in our armed forces. Our armed forces are much smaller, but the problem is still just as large.

I can reference my comments from the last question. People need to know we value their being on this earth. People need to know that we value the work they have done and the sacrifices they have made. Part of expressing that value is by listening and being ready to help when we need to help.

Coupled with that is an atmosphere in which people feel safe and secure in asking for that help, because we know that is also one of the problems.

[Translation]

**Ms. Megan Leslie (Halifax, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, it is easy to give a speech full of statistics, but in this case, we must look at the facts, which are so shocking.

There are about 10 suicides a day or over 3,500 suicides a year in Canada. Suicide is the second leading cause of death among young people aged 10 to 24. Imagine that; we have statistics on children as young as 10. Suicide rates are four to six times higher for aboriginal youth than for non-aboriginal youth. The Inuit suicide rate is more than 10 times higher than the rate for the rest of the population of Canada. Furthermore, in 2002, the WHO reported that nearly one million people had committed suicide that year, which exceeded the total number of deaths by war, homicide and civil conflicts.

[English]

Shocking does not even begin to describe those statistics. That is why last Parliament I actually introduced a bill for a national suicide prevention strategy, Bill C-297, as it is known in this Parliament.

I started working on the bill after I received a call from a man in Nunavut, Jack Hicks. He is a suicide prevention educator and researcher. He called our office and said, "You need to know what is

happening in my community" and he told us about what was happening in his community. He talked about suicide and suicide prevention, and we realized we could do something legislatively. We could have a legislative answer to that. He talked about the fact that there is good work being done in provinces, in communities. In the smallest of communities and large cities there is good working being done on suicide prevention, but the problem is that it is not connected. We are not sharing best practices. We are not talking about what is working in different communities. There is no way to connect these things. So, we thought about the fact that we need a co-ordinated approach in Canada and put together this bill for a suicide prevention strategy.

In doing that, I had the great pleasure and privilege of working with the people from CASP, the Canadian Association for Suicide Prevention. They worked so hard on this issue of suicide prevention, generally, but also in helping us with our bill and bringing it forward. I am so grateful to them for their work on suicide prevention and our bill.

When we introduce a bill on suicide prevention, an issue like that, I can tell members that we get a lot of attention from media. For example, when a particular issue arises or a particular event in a community, we are asked to do some public speaking. That has been a journey for me. It has been an amazing experience. Unfortunately, we get to really become immersed in the issue of suicide but, fortunately, it means we get to hear about the stories around Canada and realize that this is such a terrible problem in our country but that there are solutions.

Last year, I was asked by APTN, Aboriginal Peoples Television Network, to do an interview because a boy, eight years old, in a small town in northern Saskatchewan died by suicide.

Can members even imagine an eight-year-old boy knowing that is an option, having seen it in his community, knowing that it was something he could do, thinking it was an answer and, frankly, knowing how to do it?

This is happening in our communities across Canada. It is something we cannot avoid. It is something we cannot hide from any more.

Another incredible experience I have had working on my own bill is being able to work across party lines on this issue. I am thrilled that the Liberals have brought forward this motion today and that we are in this House, in this amazing, wonderful place, debating this incredibly important issue. I am thrilled that we are working on the issue of suicide prevention.

I have also worked closely with the member for Kitchener—Conestoga, on the government side of the House. He is truly a champion for suicide prevention in his own community and across Canada.

In fact, this week, the Canadian Association for Suicide Prevention is holding a conference in Vancouver. It has actually honoured the two of us, both myself and the member for Kitchener—Conestoga, for our work on suicide prevention. We were both very sorry that we were not there personally to accept the award, but it has been a privilege to work with CASP and we were both so honoured to be given this award for our work.



*Business of Supply*

I have also had the opportunity to work with amazing community groups who have endorsed the bill that I introduced, and I presume they would be very supportive of this motion, organizations like the Canadian Psychiatric Association. We have had municipalities come forward and endorse the bill from all around Canada. Also, individuals, mental health workers, the Canadian Mental Health Association, and the Assembly of First Nations. It has been, really, overwhelming and so wonderful.

I also had the chance to work with a young man in my riding, named Scott Chisholm. He is actually now living in the riding of Thunder Bay—Rainy River. He put together a photo exhibit called “Collateral Damage”. They are photos and excerpts from people talking about how suicide has touched their lives. We hosted an art show, actually, in my riding office of these photos. They are stunning. Many of the folks are from Nova Scotia.

● (1620)

It was really a profound experience to walk through the exhibit and see people I knew from my community sharing their stories, people who I had no idea their lives had been touched by suicide. One of the lines or one of the tag lines Scott uses to describe his project is, “Not talking about it is not working.” He is right.

Everybody who is featured in his photo exhibit talks about that, how they have never talked about how suicide has touched their lives, how they have never shared with anybody. It is an amazing experience. He is actually touring the show around Nova Scotia and hopefully will get to some other provinces as well.

In bringing forward a private member's bill, I have often been asked if it is ever going to pass or if it has any hope of being debated in the House of Commons. I have always responded that it is part of a process, it is part of building a movement around suicide prevention. A bill can be a touchstone that people can look at and rally around.

I think that is evidenced here today. When we start talking about issues in the House of Commons, when we bring forward motions or private members' bills, we never know what is next. I could never have predicted, for example, that there would be an opposition day motion on this issue where politicians across the House would have to stand and talk about the issue of suicide prevention.

When it comes to the private member's bill, as well, I have said publicly that I will pull it if it means there is a solution. If the government says it is going to specifically mandate the Mental Health Commission to take on suicide prevention, I will pull the bill. If the government says it is actually going to put this under public health's realm, that it is going to give the jurisdiction to them, I will pull the bill. If the government says it is going to bring forward a bill for a national suicide prevention strategy, I will pull mine.

This is not a partisan issue. This is about prevention. Suicide is a preventable death. If we all work together across party lines, we can prevent suicides in this country. A suicide prevention strategy is exactly what educators and advocates around the country have been asking for. It is all they have been asking for.

The motion is a wonderful step in that direction. I really hope that together we can make it a reality.

● (1625)

**Hon. John McKay (Scarborough—Guildwood, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I want to congratulate the hon. member on her speech. I thought it was a thoughtful speech.

The idea behind the motion was to spend an entire day talking about suicide and getting that national conversation going. The member for Toronto Centre is to be congratulated.

I wanted, however, to have the member focus on military suicides. Being from Halifax, I am sure this is a bit of a sensitive issue for her. I am looking at some statistics put out by DND. Of all causes of death, and I do not have the timeframe here but the pool is 2,620 deaths, of that 2,620 deaths, among males, 696 are being described as suicide and an additional 26 from mental illness. In the order of 25% of all deaths in the military during this statistical period, exclusive of females, is from suicide.

I would be interested in the member's observations particularly with respect to being from the Halifax area.

**Ms. Megan Leslie:** Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for his question and for sharing with us this statistic.

Statistics really help us ground our discussion here because who could even imagine that 25% of male deaths in the military would be as a result of suicide.

With that statistic being shocking, I actually want to point that we have the same issue in other groups as well. I think the member would be equally surprised to know that suicide among seniors is on the rise. That is not something I knew before I started working on this issue. It is actually something that is on the rise, and folks do not know about it.

We know that more women attempt suicide, and more men are successful. I think no matter what group we look at, whether it is gay, lesbian youth, youth generally, first nations, or people serving in the military, the numbers will surprise members. I hope they surprise us or shock us to the point that we feel we actually have to act.

**Mr. Harold Albrecht (Kitchener—Conestoga, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I congratulate the member for Halifax on her good work on this initiative for the past many months, and indeed, I congratulate her on the award as well.

During this debate we have focused a lot on the need for some national leadership, guidelines, and so on. That is at the heart of what we are all agreeing on today. We acknowledge the great work that many national, provincial and regional organizations are doing on this file. I shared earlier today my experience working with the Waterloo Region Suicide Prevention Council on some of its great initiatives.

For me, it is helpful to know what initiatives are being carried out in ridings in other areas of the country. I would ask my colleague to share one or two anecdotes as evidence of the work that is going on in her area, another confirmation that we simply need to provide some resources and glue to help people work better together.

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**Ms. Megan Leslie:** Mr. Speaker, it is interesting. I had a great meeting with some folks in Halifax who do injury prevention. I thought they were coming to talk to me about helmets and making sure people wear their seat belts. Actually, what they wanted to talk to me about was suicide prevention. It says a lot to me about interesting innovative things that are happening in communities, that a provincial injury prevention group would tackle the issue of suicide, because it is injury.

With that little example, I would like to pick up on something the member raised about national coordination and federal leadership. We do not know what is happening in these communities. The Canadian Association for Suicide Prevention, CASP, has done a great job of trying to pull together what is going on. The member opposite has done the same thing. I am trying to compile a list of what is out there.

Why do we not have just one person who could say what is working in one community and share that information with Alberta or New Brunswick? This is what we are asking for, a co-ordinated approach to share those best practices and to share those good ideas across the country.

● (1630)

[Translation]

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bruce Stanton):** Before resuming debate, it is my duty, pursuant to Standing Order 38, to inform the House that the questions to be raised tonight at the time of adjournment are as follows: the hon. member for Etobicoke North, The Environment; the hon. member for Vancouver Kingsway, Citizenship and Immigration.

Resuming debate, the hon. member for Scarborough—Guildwood.

[English]

**Hon. John McKay (Scarborough—Guildwood, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I will be splitting my time with the hon. member for York West.

I appreciate the opportunity to speak on this important subject. I want to acknowledge the work of my leader, the member for Toronto Centre, who literally has changed the channel here today. I would say that he has changed the channel for the better.

Interestingly, since the motion was introduced this morning, I have had three very intense conversations with random people about this very subject. One occurred at lunch today with a pastor friend of mine who has officiated at the funeral services for 13 people who committed suicide over the course of his pastoral career. He was first on the scene for two people as he cut them down from their hanging. He said that he cleaned up blood on the floor and counselled people two hours prior to their committing suicide. He lives with that each and every day. It affects his ministry. Of course it affects all of the families that are touched by suicide. In some respects, it just never goes away.

Today I am going to take the opportunity to talk about the mental illness aspect of suicide. I do not think there is a person in the chamber who has not been affected either directly or indirectly by someone in their family or close to their family who has a mental illness. My family is no exception.

We have walked alongside our son for the last 12 years as he has battled schizophrenia. He has battled suicide attempts. He has battled addictions. We have pretty well visited every mental health facility in the eastern region of the greater Toronto area. We have been to emergency facilities. We have been to flophouses. We have been to hospitals. We have been to emergency rooms. Dozens of incidents have resulted in heartache for our family, anger, frustration, embarrassment, all resulting from Nathan's illness.

This is personal for us. We are a well-resourced middle-class family. We have access to some pretty good resources. In fact, Nathan's stepmother is a physician. But our family experience in some respects is no different from literally thousands of other Canadian families who are left to cope with this illness. Frankly, were it not for the tireless efforts of my wife in particular but clearly other members of the family, Nathan would be dead. He would be under some bridge or in some flophouse.

Mental illness is like no other illness. It literally robs an individual of his or her life while the individual is still breathing. It is an alienating and isolating illness. It removes the individual from family support. The individual cannot sustain work. The individual simply cannot sustain relationships.

Part of our incomplete response, and it is a very incomplete response, to those who have mental illness had to do with the deinstitutionalization that went on in the 1980s or 1990s. When this occurred a lot of people were put on the street and many of them were simply not capable of handling the street. Not all people on the street have a mental illness, but it is a difficult place to be when the person is fighting mental illness. Life is a lot more complicated than simply being on the street and having a mental illness and thinking about suicide. If it were that simple we could understand it.

● (1635)

I walk to work every day along Metcalfe Street and there are my regulars whom I talk to from time to time. They all at one point had lives. There is a guy outside the Starbucks at Metcalfe and Slater and I wonder what his life was like prior to begging for money.

Our experience has been with psychotic breaks. Nathan was enrolled in a post-secondary institution when he had his first psychotic break, although he may well have had previous ones that we simply did not recognize. When he was 19 he started to hear voices. Sometimes the voices told him to do things that obviously were not things that could be done. Sometimes it involved harm to himself. We have gone through the experience of arriving home and finding him unconscious, but so far, touch wood, those voices have not told him to do harm to others.

Nevertheless, he freaks out some people, particularly his female siblings, and causes all kinds of consternation for those who care for him the most. Probably he is more dangerous to himself than he is to others, but he causes a lot of turmoil for his caregivers. As I say, we are a well-resourced family and I can only imagine how difficult it must be for single mothers or other people who are not as well resourced.



I will try to avoid wearing my partisan hat, but I must admit that I have a tough time with the tough on crime agenda while I am standing for three hours in an emergency line trying to get help. It does not work for me. Yet that is the point at which Nathan is most likely to commit some criminal act. Talking about minimum mandatories to him at that stage does not mean a thing. We deal with the social services that are available to us in our community. These are the secular saints of our community, but all the time they are just scraping for resources. It is just really difficult.

Again, we live in the largest city in Canada. It is not as if there is no money, but the resources are very difficult to access. His mother acts like his advocate because he cannot or will not, and harasses people, intimidates people, yells and screams at people, reasons with people and just continually gnaws at all of the resources that need to be made available, whether it is housing, psychiatric visits, or whatever. If his mother did not do that, I dare say that we might be dealing with a suicide in our family.

This is an extraordinarily difficult issue for us, but as one of the previous speakers said, if we do not start talking about it, nothing will change. I do not think we can carry on in a civilized society like Canada and expect that if we do not get hold of this issue, things will change. Things will not change unless there is a will.

We have heard a lot of statistics in this chamber. I hope Nathan will not become a statistic. He will never be a statistic to us, but there is that possibility.

● (1640)

**Mr. Harold Albrecht (Kitchener—Conestoga, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my colleague for his very passionate speech. My heart, the hearts of members on this side and I am sure the hearts of every member in this House goes out to him and his family. I know that we have prayed for his son many times and we will continue to do that.

Like my colleague, since I have started talking about the initiative of the private members' bills and so on going back to motion no. 388 which dealt with suicide predators, I have had many people speak to me about suicide and inevitably they would share a personal story about something in their own family that they have dealt with. Just this past Sunday, a gentleman, probably in his mid-70s, talked to me about his son who had ended his life by suicide. He shared some of his pain.

I want to thank my colleague for highlighting the willingness to discuss this openly. As I mentioned, my colleague from the west, Dave Batters, was forthright in sharing his story, and now it is his wife, Denise.

The question I have relates to the pain that my colleague, and many of us, experience and the importance of having some piece in this strategy. How does he feel about the importance of having a clear part in this to deal not only with prevention and intervention, but also with the care for the families and communities that are left to pick up the broken pieces?

**Hon. John McKay:** Mr. Speaker, first of all, I want to congratulate my hon. colleague for his work on this file. It has not been unnoticed and it has been well worthwhile.

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I guess I am so far into the weeds I honestly do not have an answer. We experience it on a daily basis. We experienced it this weekend. I wish I had the magic bullet. I appreciate the efforts that all governments have made, but it is just way below an acceptable standard.

My observation in working our way through the system is that mental illness is always the poor cousin of everybody and every thing. It is the poor cousin of research and resources.

For instance, in our city when people run around saying that they are going to cut the gravy train, I know where that gravy train is going to get cut. It means, frankly, that Nathan will not have access to his acting or something like that. It is very distressing.

● (1645)

**Mr. John Rafferty (Thunder Bay—Rainy River, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my friend for sharing his story and the gift of his son, Nathan, with us today.

I think the member brings focus when he speaks about Nathan to the three million Canadians who are affected by this issue. It is not just Nathan, it is his family and everyone like Nathan and their families, co-workers and all sorts of other people. It is estimated that about three million people are touched by suicide every year in this country.

I do not want to ask the member a specific question, but I wonder if he would like to comment on that particular part of the issue and on why we do not do anything about this, and the other issues that he has pointed out.

**Hon. John McKay:** Mr. Speaker, it is actually 33 million who have been touched by this. There is not a person in this room that has not been touched by this. There is not one of our constituents who has not been touched by this. Why do we not do anything? It is probably stigmatization.

I spoke about the event I was at where I asked the minister a question, and a very senior person in the Canadian military talked about his difficulties with mental illness. It is tremendously difficult to avoid the stigmatization, particularly if one is a warrior. They would not be up to speed. Even here, sharing what I have shared, it does not exactly fit with my own image of myself.

These are difficult issues and I think that is one of the major reasons why we do not talk about it. Maybe we are embarrassed, or whatever, and we are just not able to talk about it.

**Hon. Judy Sgro (York West, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I have listened to my colleague and others and it is the first time in the 12 years I have been here that we all seem to be talking to each other about something that is really important. It is nice to hear that we all care and we are all saying the right things, but where do we go after today? Will we vote on the motion and pass it after saying nice things, and then wake up tomorrow and go our own way again?

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We have been talking about this issue for many years. Never have we talked about it in the context of an opposition day motion that the Liberal leader put forward. I am grateful he did that because it gives us an opportunity to talk about something that nobody wants to talk about. Nobody wants to talk about the suffering that is going on in the streets of our cities, in our houses and our families. The suffering is taking place, but nobody tells anybody else what goes on in their houses.

We all keep it hidden because nobody wants to talk about the difficulties, whether it is a child suffering from a drug addiction or a child with schizophrenia. Nobody wants to talk about that. Everything is wonderful in this world we live in. There are a few people who do not have places to live and a few people that go to food banks, but otherwise everybody in the world is good. It would be great if we could solve all those problems when there are so many people in this country suffering from mental illness in one capacity or another. We heard the numbers today. Another 10 people will die today by suicide because of a feeling of hopelessness and none of us seem to be able to see it.

There was a young man who was part of my extended family and grew up with my son. He was fine and just like any other kid. He did not cause any trouble and went to school. He did not get great marks, but he was doing okay. He was 20 years old in the second year of college and had challenges with his parents because he was not doing well enough. He had been at my house for supper and he and my son did their homework together. We said goodbye and that we would see him on the weekend.

The next day his mother called to see if Shawn happened to be at my house. I said no, he was not at my house, he was at her house. She said he did not come home the night before and she thought maybe he had stayed at my place. We all called around and could not find him. Then we realized his backpack was gone from his bedroom, so we did what people do. We called the police and everybody else there was to call, but there was no locating Shawn.

Some months later his shoes were found on the side of the Niagara Escarpment. His parents had found a prescription for antidepressants in his drawer at home. The doctor had said that he was being treated for severe depression, which none of us had any idea of. The doctor could not tell his parents because he was 20 years old and he needed their son's permission to tell them. Needless to say, that is how we found out that he was suffering from severe depression. Otherwise, none of us had any idea.

From the day they found his shoes until today, which is 14 years, a day does not go by that I and my family do not think about him and wonder why we did not see any of the signs of depression that he was suffering from. How did we miss it? It is a mistake for all of us. We need to be able to see the signs and know that there are services available to help people when they are suffering from that level of depression. I am sure that as long as I, my husband and especially my son and his family are alive, we will think about him often and blame ourselves for not seeing the signs.

● (1650)

That is only one section of all of this because the problems are severe. If we can find money for everything else in this world of ours, why can we not make it a priority to find money to have a

serious mental health strategy, which would include a strategy to prevent suicide?

Look at how many times in the last couple of weeks we have heard about young kids committing suicide because they were gay, or because they were being bullied and could not handle it anymore. It is way over the hill with these things that are happening, and we are allowing them to happen.

With all the great things we talk about in this House, yet we cannot deal with the issues of mental illness in this country. We must begin to come forward and talk about it as Canadians and find answers.

Those answers are there. It is encouraging to know how much everyone cares today about this issue, and hearing my colleague talk about his own personal problems in his family. What happens to the families that do not have a support system, who do not know where to go, and who have no where to go?

These young people, and these older people, end up on the streets. When we see people begging on the streets, they are not there because they want to be there. They are there because they are not well. They are not mentally or physically well or they would not be sitting on a street corner in the middle of winter begging for money. However, we walk by them and do nothing. To me, it is a major problem when we walk by and do nothing. That individual is one of God's children, just like we are, and deserves help and assistance to move forward.

I would hope that as a result of this discussion today we actually do more than just adopt our opposition day motion, but that we truly make a commitment physically, financially, and mentally that we are not going to stop. We have four years ahead of us before we have to worry about elections. Maybe the one thing that the House could do in the next four years is actually put forward a mental health strategy for the country and put the dollars behind it. I think if we could do that over four years we would leave here feeling as if we actually are accomplishing something.

● (1655)

**Ms. Linda Duncan (Edmonton—Strathcona, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, as a number of people in the House have stated, there is not a single member who has not been touched by this through a friend, family, or in their community. I am fully aware of the fact that those who are well-to-do, as the hon. member previously mentioned, have a hard time struggling with addressing mental health issues in their families, let alone suicide. Most families cannot afford the fees for a psychologist. It is reprehensible in this modern day and age.

As I am sitting here, it is occurring to me, and I would appreciate the member's comment on this, we are moving forward and several years from now we will have a new health accord. There are two issues. Is it not time that we started opening up to the public a dialogue on what the federal responsibilities are and how the federal government should be delivering on its responsibilities, including working with territories, provinces, and first nation governments, which we have to remember is an order of government, in the delivery of our services? Does she agree that mental health, including suicide, should probably be part of that dialogue?



**Hon. Judy Sgro (York West, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I certainly would hope that it would be. Frankly, what we need to do is look at that health accord and start dealing with mental health right at the top. Many of the people who are suffering from a variety of different parts of this package of mental health that we talked about, if they were mentally better, if they were physically and mentally stronger, maybe it would be less of a strain on the rest of the whole health system.

People who are suffering from depression, and so on and so forth, are bound to be at the doctor far more often because of a variety of different illnesses. I would like to see the mental well-being of Canadians to be the number one thing. Start there and all of the other things might fall into place.

**Mr. Colin Carrie (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Health, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I listened intently to the member's very heartfelt speech.

The member mentioned a mental health strategy for Canada. I know she is supportive of the Mental Health Commission of Canada, which is working on the development of a mental health strategy. Consultations are currently under way. The commission expects to release the strategy in 2012. There will be elements of suicide prevention in it.

When we start working together with all the different levels of government and community organizations, it is very important for all of us to be on the same page. We are looking for leadership and local solutions.

Could the member tell us, in her opinion, how can municipalities and communities get together to share their successes to help address this horrible tragedy of suicide?

**Hon. Judy Sgro:** Mr. Speaker, we have to start thinking outside the box.

Let me tell the member about a problem I had in my area as a metro councillor in the city of Toronto. There was a problem with street prostitution. Many of the young women were homeless drug addicts, there for all kinds of reasons. I was tired of moving them from my area to someone else's area with police enforcement. I brought all of the appropriate officials together and we did some serious brainstorming. I developed the first time offender's diversion program, the so-called John school. That was thinking outside the box.

We need to think differently as to how we can solve these problems. The current way is clearly not meeting the needs and is not enough. I do welcome the recommendations that will come from the Mental Health Commission of Canada.

However, everything is taking too long. We are being too bureaucratic in trying to figure out our answers. We need to work with the cities and provinces. We must come together. We all recognize the problem. We need to talk about it every day to figure out solutions. I hope as a result of today's discussion we will do that.

• (1700)

**Mr. Mark Strahl (Chilliwack—Fraser Canyon, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I will be splitting my time with the hon. member for Kitchener—Conestoga, a member who has been a leading and

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indeed an award-winning advocate on the issue of suicide prevention.

I also want to say to the member for Scarborough—Guildwood that it was an honour to be in this place to hear one of the most courageous speeches I have been able to witness in my young career. I want to thank him for that.

One of the most devastating and tragic events a family, a friend, a colleague or a community can face is the suicide of someone they know. Suicide does not discriminate and it can happen to anyone, as we heard, regardless of age, gender or ethnicity.

We had a very high profile situation right here in Ottawa when young Daron Richardson took her life last year. The grief and outpouring of emotion that was displayed had a profound impact on many parliamentarians. Many MPs were honoured to join the Richardsons here on the Hill this past February to help the family launch the Do It for Daron suicide awareness campaign. This campaign has raised awareness of teen suicide in the Ottawa community.

While there are many contributing factors to suicide, mental illness is the major one. People with mood disorders are at particularly high risk of suicide. Studies indicate that more than 90% of suicide victims suffer from a mental illness or substance abuse problem. By addressing the underlying issues associated with suicide, such as mental illness, we can save lives.

Community engagement is critical for our individual well-being. Support or lack of support from a community can have a significant impact on an individual's mental health and on an individual's decision to end his or her life. Our government believes in the power of Canadian communities and is actively supporting efforts and initiatives that will help contribute to the health of Canadians.

I will tell members about the ways this government is helping communities understand the factors contributing to mental illnesses.

In 2007 the government created the Mental Health Commission of Canada as an independent arm's-length organization to provide a national focal point for mental illness. The government has invested \$130 million in the commission over 10 years to advance work on mental health issues. The commission has extended its reach into Canadian communities through many of its initiatives, such as its anti-stigma campaign and work to improve access to information and best practices. The commission is also developing a national mental health strategy which is to be released in 2012.

The commission is undertaking a groundbreaking project to investigate mental illness and homelessness. In 2008 the government provided \$110 million over five years for this project. The project is taking place in five Canadian cities: Vancouver, Winnipeg, Toronto, Montreal and Moncton. This project provides housing to homeless people with a mental illness so they can concentrate on improving their mental health.

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We can agree that improved mental health will contribute to reducing the risk of suicide. This innovative project has the potential to make Canada a world leader in providing services to homeless people living with mental illness. This project has taken more than 1,000 mentally ill and homeless people off the streets and has facilitated access to community mental health services, including suicide prevention programs for many more.

In Vancouver the program is focusing on homeless people with mental illnesses and addictions. Over 450 people have been involved and over 220 have been housed.

In Winnipeg the program is working to address homelessness within the aboriginal population. As hon. members may know, the Winnipeg homeless population is estimated to be 75% to 80% aboriginal. In that city over 400 people have been involved and over 119 people now have homes.

In Toronto 30% to 40% of the homeless people come from minority communities. Racism, discrimination and stigma are barriers that can impact mental health. The project is working to address the removal of these barriers. Over 440 people have become project participants in Toronto, and as of March of this year, 175 have been housed.

● (1705)

In Moncton and Montreal the projects are providing services for homeless people in English and French speaking communities. As of March, work in these cities had resulted in over 580 mentally ill homeless people joining the program and 259 being housed.

When we speak of community well-being, we must also recognize the unique needs of first nations and Inuit communities. Our Minister of Health is from the north and knows first-hand the impact and rate of suicide in these communities.

Our government recognizes that suicide among aboriginal young people is an urgent matter. We are working to reduce the rates of suicide among aboriginal youth across Canada and in the north.

Through Health Canada, the government invested \$65 million from 2005-10 to establish the national aboriginal youth suicide prevention strategy. Budget 2010 provided \$75 million from 2010-15 to continue this support to communities and address aboriginal youth suicide. This is a \$10 million increase over five years.

Aboriginal youth suicide programs are one of several Health Canada initiatives that fund communities to address mental health and addictions. Other services include access to mental health counselling, addictions treatment and prevention, and mental health promotion activities. These programs are demonstrating positive results, including increased youth engagement, skills development, and improved coping and leadership skills.

Our government is also supporting broader efforts to understand the mental health of Canadians. That is why in 2012 Statistics Canada will administer a mental health survey as part of its Canadian community health survey program.

This mental health survey will provide a comprehensive picture of mental health among the Canadian population. It will provide insight into the extent and distribution of selected mental disorders. It will

also examine access and use of formal and informal mental health care services and supports. Policy makers and researchers will use this information to adjust and develop policies and programs to meet the mental health needs of Canada's population.

Mental health in the workplace is also important. Many of us spend more time at our place of work than anywhere else. Good mental health at work is important not just for the individual, but also for the employer, the community and families.

Our government supports positive mental health in the workplace. On June 16 of this year we announced funding of \$320,000 for the development of a national standard for psychological health and safety in the workplace. This is a collaborative undertaking led by the Mental Health Commission of Canada in partnership with the Canadian Standards Association, the Bureau de normalisation du Québec, Human Resources and Skills Development Canada, Health Canada and the Public Health Agency of Canada.

The objective of the national standard is to provide employers with a set of best practices which, when properly applied, would lead to measurable improvements in psychological health and safety in the workplace. This project will make it easier for employers to take steps to promote mental health in the workplace. Canada will be the first country in the world to develop such a standard.

In closing, our government's investments in understanding and addressing mental health at the community level is just one way that we are demonstrating our commitment to improving mental health and reducing the rate of suicide in Canada.

**Mr. Colin Carrie (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Health, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I have the honour of sitting on the health committee with the hon. member for Chilliwack—Fraser Canyon. I appreciate all the support he shows for health issues for Canadians, especially the Mental Health Commission of Canada.

Given that the federal government has already made huge investments, particularly with the first nations and Inuit mental health and addiction programs, from mental health promotion to addictions prevention, crisis counselling, treatment and after care services, I am wondering if my colleague could respond as to why the government should continue targeting aboriginal people, particularly aboriginal youth.

**Mr. Mark Strahl:** Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the parliamentary secretary for his service in this area as well.

As we have heard throughout the day today, the suicide rate in aboriginal communities is disproportionately high. We need to take concrete steps to address that. We need to assist those communities.



As I said in my speech, we believe in a community-based approach where we are not imposing a standard on a community but working with the community to come up with ways to address the issue.

We have invested \$65 million over five years, from 2005-10, and have increased that to \$75 million over the next five years to renew that strategy. We have been funding mental health counselling, addictions treatment, youth suicide prevention and other things to address the specific concern the member has. We need to take concrete steps to address the issue of the high rate of suicide among aboriginal youth.

• (1710)

**Hon. Gail Shea (Minister of National Revenue, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, there are many aboriginal communities in Canada and many in his province of British Columbia. We know that suicide is a very horrific issue for families to deal with.

I wonder if the member would share with this House everything the federal government is doing to address the high rates of suicide in aboriginal communities in particular.

**Mr. Mark Strahl:** Mr. Speaker, as I have indicated, we have been there with funding in the amount of \$65 million between 2005 and 2010 and \$75 million going forward.

As I also indicated, the issues of a first nations community in my riding of Chilliwack—Fraser Canyon are different from the Minister of Health's riding in the north. We want to ensure that we are working with the communities, with the first nations and with the provinces and territories to come up with the best strategies and the best practices. Funding is part of it, but part of it is how we work with our partners in the provinces and the territories and with the first nations to deliver services that will benefit those at-risk youth, including in aboriginal communities.

**Mr. Harold Albrecht (Kitchener—Conestoga, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague from Chilliwack—Fraser Canyon for his insightful remarks. I also extend my thanks to the leader of the Liberal Party for bringing this motion forward today and to the member for Halifax for her work on suicide prevention and for tabling a private member's bill in regard to that.

It is important that we, as a Parliament, are the leaders in doing all that we can to end the silence around this very tragic epidemic. We need to do what we can to reduce the stigma of those families who have been the victims of suicide. On this side of the House, we are committed to doing all that we can.

Last Thursday, I had the honour of tabling in this chamber my private member's bill, which deals with this very issue, Bill C-300.

We have a lot of good work already being done by hundreds of community groups throughout Canada, and most of these, if not all, are volunteer groups. We have the Canadian Association for Suicide Prevention. It has done amazing work over the years developing its blueprint. I congratulate the association on its efforts. It works with very little encouragement from other levels of government, but it has done amazing work for us.

We have the Ontario Association for Suicide Prevention. In my own area, we have the Waterloo Region Suicide Prevention Council, which has done just amazing work in the Waterloo region. Just

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recently I had the honour being in my colleague's riding, the Minister of State for Science and Technology, for a golf tournament that was raising funds to raise awareness of suicide prevention issues. I thank them for that good work.

Another agency with which I have had the honour of working over the last two years is called Your Life Counts. This is a group of people who voluntarily do work on the Internet. They provide Internet resources to young people especially who are dealing with suicidal thoughts and struggling with issues in life that are difficult for them to handle, challenges that face all of our youth. They are doing good work in providing that Internet access but they do not end just simply with the Internet access. They then offer personal services to people who contact them.

I will highlight another story, which we have all heard numerous times today, for those who may not have been here earlier. The story is about my colleague, Dave Batters, who tragically ended his life a few years ago. I congratulate his family for the great work they are doing in bringing awareness to this issue. I have had contact with Denise Batters since we started this initiative. She draws our attention to the YouTube video that highlights some ways that we can raise awareness around this issue.

Those groups have worked hard on our behalf and all they are asking for is some federal coordination, some federal leadership, and that is exactly the motivation for my private member's bill.

I will not read the entire bill but I would like to highlight some of the actions that my bill would ask for.

The bill would formally define suicide as a public health issue and a health and safety priority. It would improve public awareness of suicide and its related issues. It would make statistics publicly accessible, promote collaboration and knowledge exchange. I think this is one of the things we have heard many times today. If we could exchange the best practices that are already being implemented across our country, we could do so much more.

The bill would define and share the best practices and get the research that is being done out of the classroom, so to speak, and into the hands of those who are actually doing the work on the ground.

Finally, there would be a responsibility on the part of the government agency to report back regularly to Canadians.

The number of suicides in Canada is a great tragedy. We have heard many personal stories today. We have heard the story of the Richardson family. Many of us will remember the story of the Kajouji family here in Ottawa who lost their daughter. This particular suicide was done at the hands of an Internet predator who used the Internet to actually encourage suicide.

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● (1715)

My motion in the fall of 2009 was to encourage our government to implement within the Criminal Code clarity as to the penalties for those who would encourage suicide. We already know that encouraging someone to commit suicide is punishable by up to 14 years in prison. What was not clear is whether that included technologies such as Internet and computer system. That was my motivation for that motion.

It is estimated that there are 10 suicides a day in Canada. If we take that on a monthly basis, that is the equivalent of a large airliner going down every month and every person in that airliner dying. If that were happening, I think there would be a huge call for action. That is exactly what we are hearing today with this motion. That is the motivation for my private member's bill. It is my hope that, through these initiatives and others, we will actually see some action on these issues.

I just want to read the motion for those who may be watching because it is important to get the entire context of what is said here.

That the House agree that suicide is more than a personal tragedy, but is also a serious public health issue and public policy priority; and, further, that the House urge the government to work cooperatively with the provinces, territories, representative organizations from First Nations, Inuit, and Métis people, and other stakeholders to establish and fund a National Suicide Prevention Strategy, which among other measures would promote a comprehensive and evidence-driven approach to deal with this terrible loss of life.

At this point I will stop for a moment and offer my heartfelt condolences and sympathies to those who have had to deal with this tragedy. It has been mentioned many times in this chamber today that there is not one person who has not in some way been touched this tragedy, some closer than others, some immediate family members and others close friends and colleagues.

The grief that people experience when they lose a loved one who is close to them can only be described by the people who going through that grief. My family and I have had our own share of grief over these past five months. In fact, it is five months ago today that Betty passed away. I can say that the grief is real but I cannot imagine how much more profound that grief must be for those who are left with the question and the additional emotional burden of wondering what they could have done, what they should have done or why they did not see the signs, all of those questions that I assume must come crashing in on them.

I think part of our overall approach to this issue needs to include, at some point, ways and means in which we can encourage communities with resources as to how they can walk alongside those who have experienced this tragedy.

I indicated earlier today that one of my favourite quotes as it relates to suicide prevention is the quote by Margaret Somerville, the famous ethicist from McGill University. She says:

Hope is the oxygen of the human spirit; without it our spirit dies....

I think that capsulizes what we are looking at here. We are trying to find ways to give hope, hope to people who are dealing with suicidal thoughts, for sure, needs to be our motivation, but also hope for those who are working on the ground and who have been struggling as volunteers without adequate resources, as they struggle with their efforts.

Any of the investments that we make in trying to move this ahead need to keep at the heart of it the hope that we are trying to give to people.

I will conclude with some of the statistics that I think will shock us into action in terms of the number of Canadians each year who are losing their lives to suicide. It is roughly 4,000 a year. Among our aboriginal population, estimates show that it is five to seven times beyond that, and that is just counting the suicides. It does not counting those who may have tried to commit suicide and their emotional trauma.

At the heart of what we are trying to do here is to extend that hope to people who are dealing with suicidal thoughts and to provide the framework that will actually help those organizations on the ground that are trying to continue the good work they have started.

● (1720)

**Mr. Colin Carrie (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Health, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I take this opportunity to offer my heartfelt thanks to my colleague from Kitchener—Conestoga not only for all the work he has done on this issue but also for Bill C-300 which he brought forward.

He opened his speech by saying that we must end the silence. We have had that opportunity today in the House. I commend all members who have contributed to this debate and discussion because it is something that affects all Canadians.

My question for my colleague regards the link between mental health and suicide. He is aware that the World Health Organization estimates that: 90% of all suicide victims have some kind of mental health condition, often depression or substance abuse; suicide is the most common cause of death for people with schizophrenia; both major depression and bipolar disorders account for 15% to 25% of all deaths by suicide in patients with severe mood disorders.

Would the member explain how important it is for the government to continue funding research through the Mental Health Commission of Canada?

He mentioned best practices. Does the member have any ideas as to how we could better work with the municipalities, communities and different service groups in order to bring these best practices together?

**Mr. Harold Albrecht:** Mr. Speaker, I will start with the last question first.

In terms of best practices, that is exactly what the motion today and Bill C-300 speak to, the fact that we do not know what all those best practices are. There are many groups doing excellent work. By having a central repository as well as the coordination of research and statistics we will do a better job of that.

I applaud the work of our government in funding the Mental Health Commission of Canada. In addition, it has provided the aboriginal youth suicide prevention strategy with \$75 million in funding over a five-year period I believe it is. There are 150 community-based projects that are being funded.



I must clarify that not all suicides are a result of mental health issues. People working in the field of suicide have underlined this fact. We must not miss this public health aspect and need to address that in our suicide prevention strategy with a desire to move forward on those issues.

● (1725)

**Mr. Charlie Angus (Timmins—James Bay, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I will follow up on my colleague's last comments which clarify the issue of there being suicides that are related to mental illness and then another swathe of suicides.

When we look at the suicide epidemic—and “epidemic” is a horrific word to use in connection with suicide but I do not know what other word to use—in first nation communities, we must look at children in communities like Kashechewan who experience feelings of hopelessness. When I visited Attawapiskat and Fort Albany I spoke with children in grades 3 and 4 who said they were giving up hope. That is a staggering indictment.

We have seen a slate of suicides in northwestern Ontario where young people have been forced to go to school because there are no schools in their communities. They just disappear. They are missing for days, weeks and months. It seems as if there is a black hole.

What would my hon. colleague suggest to the first nation youth who are falling through the cracks at an astounding rate? What steps are needed to ensure that when a first nation child is in need, that child is not just left to die?

**Mr. Harold Albrecht:** Mr. Speaker, it is important to recognize that the government can do a lot in those situations. We have invested a lot of resources not just in terms of bricks and mortar but also in terms of personnel to help in that regard.

The primary thing we can do is offer hope and opportunity, especially economic opportunity, to these first nation communities that have often been left out of the loop. We can provide meaningful jobs for them so that the leader of the home, whether it be the husband or wife, can provide for their children.

The other aspect of the aboriginal question that I raised this morning when my colleague from the Liberal Party spoke is to recognize the importance of the spiritual aspect of suicide prevention as well. We talk about the psychological, physiological and biological aspects. However, too often in this chamber we are afraid to address the very real benefit of that spiritual foundation, regardless of what faith that is. For me it is my Christian faith. To allow these people to embrace that part of their culture as well is an important piece of this puzzle of suicide prevention.

[Translation]

**Mr. Francis Scarpaleggia (Lac-Saint-Louis, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I will be sharing my time with the hon. member for Malpeque.

I want to commend the hon. member for Toronto Centre and the leader of my party for showing such vision, wisdom, compassion and humanity by making the urgent need for our government to establish a national suicide prevention strategy the topic of today's debate on this Liberal opposition day in the House of Commons.

I also want to commend all my colleagues who have contributed to this debate by sharing their accounts and allowing us to better

### *Business of Supply*

grasp and understand this troubling problem, the scourge that is suicide. I would like in particular to acknowledge the very moving speech by the hon. member for Scarborough—Guildwood who made us think about the priorities we set as a society and as a government. We cannot help but think about the government's crime agenda and the resources it might take away from our efforts to combat suicide.

I would like to dedicate my speech to the memory of a young man whom I unfortunately never had the honour and pleasure to meet, but whose doings throughout his far too short life were known to me because his grandparents and parents are long-time friends of my own family.

This young, brilliant, athletic and talented man who was deeply loved by his family and friends was named Jack Windeler. He was in first year at the prestigious Queen's University in Kingston when tragically, at the age of 18, he took his own life. That was just under a year and a half ago, when his life was so full of potential.

● (1730)

[English]

Jack's tragic passing highlights a public and mental health problem that to date has received much too little attention, that being the vulnerability of our young people who, despite appearances, are often in a difficult transitional period from late high school to college or university and to independent living generally.

In his honour and memory, as well as to help others in trouble before it is too late, Jack's loving parents Sandra Hanington and Eric Windeler have launched the Jack Project. Its goal is to transform a painful personal loss into positive transformational action that helps our society achieve meaningful progress in combatting the scourge of youth suicide.

[Translation]

Before I go on, I would like to comment on the mental health of our young Canadians.

The image that we have of young people—the image portrayed by advertising and the media in general—is of a dynamic, fulfilled, connected generation that is open to the world and walking or even running toward a promising future. However, one-quarter of young Canadians are dealing with mental health problems.

In fact, 50% of mental health problems begin before the age of 14, and 75% begin before the age of 24. Based on objective measures, 6.5% of young people between the ages of 15 and 24 have experienced major depression in the past year. In addition, only 25% of young people with mental health problems were able to obtain the help they needed from a mental health professional.

Unfortunately, of all the age groups, 15- to 24-year-olds have the least access to the help they need to overcome their mental health problems and the pain that these problems cause them.

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[English]

The mission of the Jack Project is to help our young people achieve and sustain their optimal mental health as they transition to independent living, which often occurs during the move from high school to college and university. The Jack Project is innovative. It does not work to reinvent the wheel. It focuses on two realms of particular relevance to young people: the online world and, of course, school.

There are many fragmented services available for those contemplating ending their lives. However, because of funding constraints, many are not available in the world where today's youth live: the world of computers and cyberspace.

First, the Jack Project works to interlink, and here I quote:

—Key youth-oriented and youth-servicing partners together in a coordinated online support system to pioneer e-mental health technologies in Canada. Invest in online chat and mobile applications linking teens and young adults to the trained professionals at the Kids Help Phone.

Second, the Jack Project is working with leading mental health organizations, namely, content developers, service providers, researchers and educational professionals, to create a mental health “model of care” and a best practices “toolbox” for transitioning teens and young adults across secondary and post-secondary environments. The goal is for this model of care to become a national standard to be introduced before too long in as many as 300 high schools and 30 colleges and universities.

I imagine that most of those would be in Ontario, but the potential for expanding this national standard, this model of care, beyond of Ontario to the rest of Canada is enormous. In fact, a national suicide strategy would probably help in the goal of making this model of care more widely available from coast to coast to coast.

To say suicide is a complex phenomenon is a profound understatement. Like all complex challenges we face as a society, preventing suicide requires a comprehensive, strategic and co-ordinated approach.

In Canada, that means federal leadership. It is leadership at the level of government that takes a national view of issues and that has the experience of bringing other levels of government together in common purpose to achieve goals of interest to all Canadians.

We need a national suicide prevention strategy in Canada to gather our resources and insights together for the purpose of saving lives threatened by mental health challenges, among others, that too often lead to the ultimate end.

Almost 17 years ago, at a conference held under the auspices of the United Nations in Calgary and Banff, held in these locations precisely because of Alberta's recognized leadership in the area of suicide prevention, a solemn commitment was made among nations, many of them G8 nations, to give priority to creating national suicide prevention strategies. Sadly, we still in Canada have not developed and implemented such a strategy.

The message of today's debate is that it is never too late. We lost Jack, but hopefully with greatly and urgently needed political will encouraged by the courageous and visionary work of his parents,

Sandra and Eric, work further aided by this debate today, Jack's life and memory can help all of us save others.

• (1735)

**Mr. Colin Carrie (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Health, CPC):** Madam Speaker, I want to thank my colleague from Lac-Saint-Louis for his comments. He mentioned the Jack Project, which is an innovative approach to mental health, especially for our youth.

Given there has been significant investment by the federal government in risk factor reduction, such as the national drug strategy and the anti-stigma initiative of the Mental Health Commission, I was wondering if the member could clarify further the types of programs that are a priority for his national strategy. What does he see the federal government's role to be in his home province of Quebec?

**Mr. Francis Scarpaleggia:** That is a very good question, Madam Speaker.

Indeed there are many good programs available. We all recognize that there are programs available in the provinces, at the grassroots level and in communities across the country, but what is needed is the coming together of people and programs in a directed approach. That really requires coordination, and it is only through the leadership of the federal government that we can have national coordination and the sharing of best practices from coast to coast to coast.

Of course there are good programs. We do not want to reinvent the wheel, but when we want to make progress on an issue, it is best to give particular attention to that issue. This is why Liberals are calling for a national suicide prevention strategy. It is not because measures do not exist in different government programs, but if one wants to champion an issue, one has to raise its profile, and the best way to do that is to focus particularly on that issue. That is why we want a national strategy.

**Mr. Charlie Angus (Timmins—James Bay, NDP):** Madam Speaker, I listened with great interest to my colleague. He spoke generally about the issue of suicide, but I want to speak about the crisis that is affecting the children in my region, children who have been completely abandoned by the federal government. In fact, there are communities with no schools. I do not know if my hon. colleague read the suicide report from the coroner about the crisis in Pikangikum, which specifically identified the fact that children without schools have a sense of hopelessness.

I would like to bring the member's attention to the fact that the Shannen's Dream campaign, which has been fighting for equal rights for children, has been stonewalled time and time again by the government. This issue is actually being taken to the United Nations in February. There will be an unprecedented situation: children from northern reserves are going to challenge Canada at the international review of the Convention on the Rights of the Child for Canada's systemic negligence toward children. It is this systemic negligence that has led to hundreds and hundreds of suicides across the northern territories as well as children being incarcerated and dropping out.



I would like to ask the member what he thinks it says about a country when children have to take their fight to the United Nations to get attention to the fact that they are not even being provided with schools.

• (1740)

**Mr. Francis Scarpaleggia:** Madam Speaker, in this case we see an urgent need that is falling through the cracks. When children have to take their country to the United Nations, obviously the ball has been dropped.

That is why we need a kind of national prism that a national strategy provides. Until we have a national vision, we do not see the picture as a whole, which means we cannot always see where the lacunas are that require some attention.

That is why a national strategy is so important. It would give us the tool we need to perceive the problem as a whole and to see the entire picture. It would prevent us from missing anything, which is apparently what has happened in this case.

**Hon. Wayne Easter (Malpeque, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, the leader's remarks in terms of the action component were that we need to establish and fund a national suicide prevention strategy, which among other measures would promote a comprehensive and evidence-driven approach to deal with this terrible loss of life by suicide.

The key point is that suicide is preventable. Our leader said in his remarks that the suicide rate is three times higher in Canada than in the United States. Many others here have expressed part of the reason for that difference. Those numbers are just plain unacceptable.

It has been moving to listen to the heartfelt remarks by members in the House today from all parties. Now we have to turn that emotion, that concern and that expression into action. We all say, when suicides happen, "If only...". We do not want to be back here in a year after other situations occur and say, "If only..."

Yes, we can talk about the numbers, but the numbers are a person whose death is so hard on families and friends. Such a loss is human, but it is a loss of social and economic potential.

We all know of people we have lost from our communities. I know of one who worked on my election campaign in May. A week after the victory celebration we heard the word that he had committed suicide. He was a farmer who left a family and two kids. He left 70-year-old parents whose hopes and dreams for their retirement were destroyed, because this young fellow in his late thirties was doing the farming. That was their future. That was their hopes and dreams.

There was much horror and destruction in that family. I can remember the night of the victory celebration and dance. Everyone was happy, and this happened a week later. We all asked the question, "Why? What did I miss? What did we miss as a whole?"

I recall vividly my days as a farm leader during the farm financial crisis of the 1980s, when interest rates were at 23%. Some of us in the House do not believe interest rates were ever that high. The minister of financial institutions certainly does. We were both in that movement together at the time, with an interest rate of 23.5%. Farm

debt was coming out our ears, and we all felt that pain. That was the time of penny auctions, and farm suicides were at the highest they ever were.

Two friends of mine in Saskatchewan committed suicide. One, aged 27, committed suicide one day, and his 28-year-old friend committed suicide the next. What worked reasonably well was that we set up farm crisis hotlines through which people came together.

We all think we are tough. We can abuse people in the House and we can take abuse in the House, but during those times I would walk across the yard at 5:30 a.m. and say, "My pride is shot. I am the one who could potentially lose this farm. Is the world better off without me?" Those are the thoughts that go through one's mind, and those are the actions that some of our colleagues in the farm community took at the time.

• (1745)

What worked reasonably well was setting up farm crisis hotlines. They were in Ontario, the west and Atlantic Canada. People with some expertise came together to sit down, and people could sit down and talk about their problems. They would find out that their neighbours had pretty near the same problems that they did. It was being able to talk about it and be open that gave people the courage to face their problems and move ahead.

It is one of those things. When people with financial problems or mental problems are walking down the street, sometimes people will walk to the other side of the street. It is not like a physical ailment, for which people will come and offer support, and I think we have to recognize that. Understanding that reaction has to be part of a national strategy.

One other example I will give out of those times is of a friend I had in Alberta. I personally was working on his case with the farm finance issue. We were just a couple of weeks from a deal; through this restructuring, he was going to lose half his farm. He called me one night, late, and I happened to answer the phone at one o'clock in the morning P.E.I. time. I think it was ten or eleven o'clock in the province he was in.

He basically said, "Thanks for your effort, but that is it. I am packing it in."

Now, I happened to answer the phone. I talked to him for a bit. I called a friend who was not an hour from his place. That guy did not do what he intended to do; he lost half his farm, but he has lived a pretty good life since that time.

It just shows the importance. It is not just mental issues. It is stress issues or family issues, and things happen quickly. We need to develop the understanding and the encouragement for people to talk and to accept help in those times of personal trauma that cause us to do things we otherwise would not think of doing.

The bottom line is, as my colleague previously said, we do need a national strategy. We are a federation, a country, and we can do much together. This is an area where I think we basically all agree in this House. Much more needs to be done.

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As a country we have a history of doing much together, but what it requires to get to that action I talked about earlier is federal leadership. I encourage the federal government to not only support this motion today but to turn it into action, to call the necessary meetings with the appropriate people in the provinces across the country and to act on what the motion says. It is the action that at the end of the day will prevent us from having to say why we did not act.

I will close with this quote from Dr. Nizar Ladha, president of the Canadian Psychiatric Association. She says:

Canada stands alone as one of the few developed nations without a national strategy for the prevention of suicide. It is astonishing that more isn't being done to stop this serious yet often preventable public health problem. We need leadership from our federal leaders to advance good health policy. Many psychiatric disorders lead to untimely deaths by suicide in all ages. This can change if we tackle this complex problem with a nationally coordinated and multi-faceted approach.

That is the action we need to see as a result of this motion.

• (1750)

**Mr. Bev Shipley (Lambton—Kent—Middlesex, CPC):** Madam Speaker, I want to thank my colleague for his comments. He and I, I suspect at that time, went through those. I remember those at the end of the 70s and early 80s. As much as we thought we were growing and expanding, there were some incredibly stressful times, and it is amazing what that will do to someone.

One of the things he talked about was the crisis hotline, but there were also debt review boards that were put in place. I only mention that because what it did is it gave an avenue to communicate and to talk. It gave an avenue where a person who had issues with finances was able to talk to someone who actually understood it. They had the opportunity to give people some options, to give them what we have been talking about today, hope about how they would continue to do their business.

One of the things that has always astounded me is, over time we have the brightest of doctors and medical researchers and we still do not understand the human body and the mind. With those complications in front of us, I would ask my colleague what he would do to help establish more communication? How can we go about that? Because I think communication is one of the key components.

**Hon. Wayne Easter:** Madam Speaker, it may sound like a simple answer, but I really think it is just being open about the issue. This is not a situation that we should hide from.

In terms of the experience that both of us had in the farm crisis, with hotlines and the debt review boards, it was people recognizing that others had the same problem. It was recognizing that their neighbours, governments, and the community could come together to assist them in a number of ways. It was basically just being open about it, that this is not something to be afraid of, to admit there is a problem.

Stepping out that door and admitting they have a problem is the first step. We have to give people the encouragement to do that and the acceptance of society if they do.

• (1755)

**Hon. Judy Sgro (York West, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, I want to thank my colleague for his insightful comments.

Of the 307 people that are in the House today, many of us have spoken about the desire to see this move forward in a constructive way. What would the member suggest as far as the action that we could be taking following today, as parliamentarians of all parties, to be out there publicly talking?

I think today we have made a huge step forward by talking about this in the House of Commons. Where do we go after today and how do we move this forward tomorrow and the next day, given the fact that we all are very committed to the same issue? How do we get that public airing to start so that we can constructively move forward?

**Hon. Wayne Easter:** Madam Speaker, I think the leader of the party said that very vividly in his remarks when he opened this discussion, when he made the motion and that is, that this issue requires federal leadership. It could be any number of things. It could be utilizing one of the ministers, whether health or others, to set up a committee to look at a national strategy on suicide. It could be the Prime Minister, in what he should be doing anyway, calling a first ministers meeting on a number of issues and putting that down as one of the agenda items.

The key point I want to make is that under our system of government and the various constitutional responsibilities, and there are certainly split jurisdictions in this area, in order to get the kind of action that is needed, it will require leadership from the Prime Minister and executive council.

**Mr. Rod Bruinooge (Winnipeg South, CPC):** Madam Speaker, it is a pleasure to rise and speak on this topic today as it reminds me of one of those occasional days in the House when we do have meaningful debate that sets aside a lot of partisan-charged rhetoric. These kinds of debates allow us to have really good discussions and allow us to bring good ideas forward. That has happened today, and I want to commend the mover for bringing forward this motion.

Coming from an aboriginal family and living in an aboriginal community for much of my life, I have seen this issue unfortunately occur in many families. Others in the House have talked about that because we have all experienced the effect of suicide in our lives.

I do recall hearing a simple statement over the years and it is a simple statement that bears repeating, and that is that no one ever wants to commit suicide, he or she just wants the pain to end. So that is where I will start.

I would like to also extend my sympathies to all of the families that have been affected by suicide throughout the years. This tragedy exacts a terrible toll in grief and heartbreak, and leaves no one unaffected.

My hon. colleagues today have spoken about initiatives undertaken by the Public Health Agency of Canada regarding this issue. I want to speak a bit about how, through its initiatives and investments, our government is working with its partners to break the cycle of hopelessness and despair that still exists in some aboriginal communities.



Our government has invested in many programs and initiatives that are playing a critical role in improving the quality of life for aboriginal people, building safer, healthier and stronger communities. In the time I have today, I will only talk about a few of them.

We recognize that it takes more than bricks and mortar to build and sustain a healthy community. That is why our government is working with its partners to strengthen what is the cornerstone of any community, the family.

I would like to point out that we introduced just last week Bill S-2, family homes on reserves and matrimonial interests or rights act. This bill offers a balanced and effective solution to long-standing injustice that affects people living on reserves, particularly women and children.

In the event of a relationship breakdown, death of a spouse or common law partner or family violence, many of the legal rights and remedies relating to matrimonial interests in the family home that are available off reserve are not available to individuals who live on reserve, with potentially very serious consequences. I am looking forward to the passage of this important legislation because I truly believe all parties in this place would prefer to see women and children protected rather than being left vulnerable by this legal void.

In order to further support the family our government initiated and continues to be engaged in an ongoing reform of the first nations child and family services program with a focus on results. We are working with our partners in the provinces and first nations themselves to implement what is called an enhanced prevention focused approach aimed at providing better outcomes for children and their families.

This is a new model designed to ensure the best practices in prevention-based services are brought to first nations communities. It broadens the tool kit of culturally appropriate services, which will help first nations family and child services work with families during breakups and keep children in their homes.

We launched this model in 2007 with a signing of a tripartite agreement with the province of Alberta and Alberta first nations. Today, tripartite agreements are also in place with our first nation partners in Saskatchewan, Manitoba, Quebec, Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island. With these six agreements in place, enhanced prevention services are reaching close to 70% of first nations children who live on reserves in Canada.

Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada also works with a broad range of stakeholders on the co-ordination of family violence programming to better protect the interests of first nations women, children and families.

● (1800)

Partners in this effort include the National Aboriginal Circle Against Family Violence, the Native Women's Association of Canada, the Assembly of First Nations and of course the provinces and territories as well as many of the departments within our federal government.

By providing family violence prevention and protection services, we can enhance the safety and security of first nation women and

children, and achieve a more secure family environment for children on reserve.

We recognize, however, that even with the best efforts at prevention, crises can befall families, first nations families, all families in Canada. This is partly why Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development provides operational funding of some \$18 million a year to support a network of 41 shelters, serving approximately 300 first nations communities.

Every year, approximately 1,900 women and 2,300 children access these services. We would prefer they were not needed, but it is a reality throughout society that we must face.

These are just a few examples of what our government is doing to protect the welfare of first nation children and families, to keep those children safe, to keep families together and build stronger, healthier communities.

This group of government programs I have described do not work in isolation. They are part of a much broader, co-ordinated effort by our government, developed in partnership with aboriginal people and organizations.

We continue to listen to aboriginal people and we have heard their concerns. We are taking action, and will continue to do so. For example, in June, the hon. Minister of Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development and the National Chief of the Assembly of First Nations announced a Canada-First Nations joint action plan. The goal of the action plan is simple: to improve the lives of first nations people across Canada, and in doing so, contribute to a stronger and more prosperous country.

The action plan is based on common goals and shared principles. It states our commitment to work together to achieve concrete and practical progress, to build effective, appropriate and fully accountable governance structures, which is important, and empower the success of individuals through access to education, opportunity and property. It reflects our commitment to implementing the programs and investments that enable strong, sustainable and self-sufficient communities, and to creating conditions to accelerate economic development opportunities for all Canadians.

Of equal importance, this action plan reflects our shared commitment to respect the role of first nations culture and language in our history and in our future. The plan also specifically has important goals in relation to four areas, education, accountability, transparency, economic development and negotiation, and implementation.

I would like to speak a bit more, though, about education, as I see it as a key and important area which will help alleviate much of the hopelessness that we see in first nations communities. This engagement process that I spoke of recommends a framework for providing modifications to the way we deliver K to 12 education in first nations communities.

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The national panel is holding a series of round tables and other activities across the country to engage parents, students, teachers, elders, educators and anyone, in fact, who has an interest in improving first nations education. These round tables are enjoying strong participation.

The panel will make recommendations to the minister and to the national chief on options for positive change for first nations students. This could include the possibility of new legislation to improve the governance framework and clarify accountability for first nations elementary and secondary education. We look forward to receiving this panel's report and recommendations by the end of the year.

The action plan commits Canada and the Assembly of First Nations to pursue initiatives that increase the transparency and accountability of first nations government through their respective constituents. This would include initiatives to improve first nations electoral processes, such as those advanced at regional first nations organizations, such as, the Manitoba Assembly of Chiefs, which has called for a common election day, as well as a four year cycle. Changes such as this will greatly improve the transparency process of their electoral practices.

In many remote locations, first nations communities can be especially vulnerable to fire, flood and other natural disasters. The action plan also includes a joint commitment to continued development and implementation of emergency management frameworks.

● (1805)

Perhaps the most vivid illustration of our action and real improvement in the aboriginal quality of life is Canada's economic action plan. When the government unveiled the first action plan two years ago, we made sure that this comprehensive blueprint for economic renewal focused on priorities that were and remain foremost in the minds of Canadians: the construction of more reserve housing; improving on-reserve health; developing training and skills development opportunities for young people taking part in these construction activities; and accelerating ready to go projects in first nations communities in three key areas: schools, water and critical community services.

By means of the economic action plan, we invested \$1.4 billion over the past two fiscal years on things that matter most to all Canadian families, aboriginal and non-aboriginal alike. I believe all of these investments have made a difference in supporting our first nations communities and I look forward to the opportunity to see the fruits of all of this investment in the years to come. Unfortunately, though, it does take time.

I believe that our efforts as a government will continue to put aboriginal people's interests first and I look forward to being a part of that plan.

**Hon. Judy Sgro (York West, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, I hank the hon. member for sharing his government's plans.

Given the overwhelming number of suicides within first nations communities, I would think that must be an issue of grave concern to my hon. colleague. Following the adoption of today's motion, would

you become one of what I hope to be 308 champions of mental health?

**The Deputy Speaker:** I would remind all members to direct their questions through the Speaker.

The hon. member for Winnipeg South.

**Mr. Rod Bruinooge:** Madam Speaker, I know the member is also very supportive of improved outcomes in aboriginal communities. I, of course, would be happy to champion this issue. I have in the past and will continue to do so in the future.

● (1810)

**Mr. Don Davies (Vancouver Kingsway, NDP):** Madam Speaker, during his speech, my hon. colleague spent a great deal of time focusing on the particular challenges of mental health in first nations communities.

I am struck by the fact that the government proposed Bill C-10 in the House, a bill that consists of 152 pages and puts nine previous bills into one bill. We know the federal prison system is grossly and disproportionately represented by first nations, many of whom suffer from mental health issues and 80% of whom have addictions issues, which in itself is a mental health issue.

I am wondering how my hon. colleague from Winnipeg South squares his government's focus on legislation that does nothing to address mental health or addictions in our federal prison system when it is so clearly and profoundly a source of problems for our first nations.

**Mr. Rod Bruinooge:** Madam Speaker, I, of course, live in a province that has one of the most significant aboriginal populations and we also have a significant aboriginal population that is incarcerated. The flip side of that incarceration, unfortunately, is that much of the aboriginal crime has been committed against other aboriginal people. Aboriginal people deserve not to have crimes continuously foisted upon them. The aboriginal people in my province, unfortunately, have seen many of their community members become incarcerated. However, they also appreciate being safe from some people who become quite violent and want them incarcerated.

It is a challenging issue but at the same time the high crime rate is mostly against aboriginal people themselves. It is very concerning. I am not one who wants to create new laws that exempt aboriginal people from certain types of crime. I do not want a second set of laws for aboriginal people because I do not think that is at all fair in our country.

**Mrs. Joy Smith (Kildonan—St. Paul, CPC):** Madam Speaker, our government has implemented a national youth suicide prevention plan and there have been so many positive things that have come out of that. Perhaps the member could outline a few of them to reassure this House about the good work we are doing.

**Mr. Rod Bruinooge:** Madam Speaker, I know the member has spent a lot of time on the health committee and has a number of things that she has already spoken of today.



I will go back to one part of my presentation that I did not get to develop as much as I would have liked. It is in relation to Bill S-2 and what we would be implementing in relation to matrimonial property rights. I think this would be a fundamental improvement to the lives of first nations people where women, in particular, when a marriage breaks up, would be able to have access to the family home via this new legal vehicle. I believe it is perhaps the first time in our history as a country that aboriginal people on reserve would be able to remedy situations that they find themselves in with this legal device so that they could actually retain a family home instead of perhaps having it simply taken from them in a marriage breakdown, even though they have young children and would prefer to live there.

**The Deputy Speaker:** It being 6:15, it is my duty to interrupt the proceedings and put forthwith every question necessary to dispose of the business of supply.

The question is on the motion. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**Some hon. members:** No.

**The Deputy Speaker:** All those in favour of the motion will please say yea.

**Some hon. members:** Yea.

**The Deputy Speaker:** All those opposed will please say nay.

**Some hon. members:** Nay.

**The Deputy Speaker:** In my opinion the yeas have it.

*And five or more members having risen:*

**The Deputy Speaker:** Call in the members.

● (1840)

[Translation]

(The House divided on the motion, which was agreed to on the following division:)

(Division No. 37)

## YEAS

### Members

Ablonczy	Adams
Aglukkaq	Albas
Albrecht	Alexander
Allen (Welland)	Allen (Tobique—Mactaquac)
Allison	Ambler
Ambrose	Anderson
Andrews	Angus
Armstrong	Ashfield
Aspin	Atamanenko
Aubin	Ayala
Baird	Bateman
Bélanger	Bennett
Benoit	Benskin
Bernier	Bevington
Bezan	Blanchette
Blanchette-Lamothe	Blaney
Block	Boivin
Borg	Boughen
Boulerice	Boutin-Sweet
Brahmi	Braid
Breitkreuz	Brossseau
Brown (Leeds—Grenville)	Brown (Newmarket—Aurora)

Brown (Barrie)	Bruinooog
Butt	Byrne
Calandra	Calkins
Cannan	Carmichael
Caron	Carrie
Casey	Charlton
Chicoine	Chisholm
Chisu	Chong
Choquette	Christopherson
Clarke	Clement
Coderre	Comartin
Côté	Cotler
Crowder	Cullen
Cuzner	Daniel
Davidson	Davies (Vancouver Kingsway)
Davies (Vancouver East)	Day
Dechert	Del Mastro
Devolin	Dion
Dionne Labelle	Donnelly
Doré Lefebvre	Dreeshen
Dubé	Duncan (Vancouver Island North)
Duncan (Etobicoke North)	Duncan (Edmonton—Strathcona)
Duscault	Dykstra
Easter	Eyking
Fantino	Fast
Findlay (Delta—Richmond East)	Finley (Haldimand—Norfolk)
Fletcher	Foote
Freeman	Fry
Galipeau	Gallant
Garneau	Garrison
Gill	Godin
Goguen	Golding
Goodale	Goodyear
Gosal	Gourde
Gravelle	Grewal
Grogue	Harris (Scarborough Southwest)
Harris (St. John's East)	Harris (Cariboo—Prince George)
Hassainia	Hawn
Hayes	Hiebert
Hillyer	Hoback
Hoepfner	Holder
Hsu	Hughes
Jacob	James
Julian	Kamp (Pitt Meadows—Maple Ridge—Mission)
Karygiannis	Kellway
Kenney (Calgary Southeast)	Kent
Kerr	Komarnicki
Kramp (Prince Edward—Hastings)	Lake
Lapointe	Larose
Latendresse	Lauzon
Laverdière	LeBlanc (Beauséjour)
LeBlanc (LaSalle—Émard)	Leclerc
Leitch	Lemieux
Leslie	Leung
Liu	Lizon
Lobb	Lukiwski
Lunney	MacAulay
MacKenzie	Martin
Masse	Mathysen
Mayes	McCallum
McColeman	McKay (Scarborough—Guildwood)
Menegakis	Menzies
Michaud	Miller
Moore (Abitibi—Témiscamingue)	Moore (Port Moody—Westwood—Port Coquitlam)
Moore (Fundy Royal)	Morin (Chicoutimi—Le Fjord)
Morin (Notre-Dame-de-Grâce—Lachine)	Morin (Laurentides—Labelle)
Morin (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot)	Mulcair
Murray	Nantel
Nash	Nicholls
Nicholson	Norlock
Nunez-Melo	O'Connor
O'Neill Gordon	Obhrai
Oda	Opitz
Papillon	Paradis
Patry	Payne
Péclet	Penashue
Perreault	Pilon
Poiliève	Preston
Quach	Rac
Rafferty	Raith
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Raynault	Regan
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Sandhu	Savoie
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Schellenberger	Seeback
Sellah	Sgro
Shea	Shipley
Shory	Simms (Bonavista—Gander—Grand Falls—Wind- sor)
Sims (Newton—North Delta)	Sitsabaiesan
Smith	Sopuck
Sorenson	St-Denis
Stanton	Stewart
Stoffer	Storseth
Strahl	Sullivan
Sweet	Thibeault
Tilson	Toet
Toews	Toone
Tremblay	Trost
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Van Loan	Vellacott
Wallace	Warawa
Warkentin	Watson
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**NAYS****Members**

Fortin

Bellavance  
Plamondon — 3**PAIRED**

Nil

**The Speaker:** I declare the motion carried.**ADJOURNMENT PROCEEDINGS**

A motion to adjourn the House under Standing Order 38 deemed to have been moved.

● (1845)

[English]

**THE ENVIRONMENT**

**Ms. Kirsty Duncan (Etobicoke North, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, tonight I implore the government to reconsider the proposed cuts to Environment Canada's atmospheric ozone research program and scientists, to end the international witch hunt for those who had the courage to speak out against the cuts, and to unmuzzle its own world-class scientists.

The proposed cuts would reduce Canada's ability to monitor earth's life-giving atmosphere and respond to problems. They would reduce our country's ability to explore the links between ozone and climate change. They would further threaten international science and Canada's reputation.

The ozone layer is expected to recover over the coming century; however, surprises are possible. Detection of the largest ozone depletion ever measured in the Arctic occurred in the spring of 2011. Models suggest that the effect of climate change may in fact lead to an excess in ozone over Canada in the long term. Therefore, there is

an urgent need to understand how climate change will affect ozone in the coming decades. Thus, it is crucial to continue ozone research, monitoring and assessment.

The minister and the parliamentary secretary have told the House of Commons that ozone monitoring services are not being cut. On the other hand, the assistant deputy minister has told reporters that budget cuts will mean that the ozone monitoring network will be reduced.

Furthermore, Environment Canada scientists responsible for managing the ozonesonde network and other aspects of the monitoring program have received letters saying their job functions are in jeopardy.

Can the government explain how its statements are consistent with these facts?

More disturbing than the government's failure to get its story straight is its failure to understand ozone science and the tremendous need for ozone research. We continue to hear the same discredited and ridiculous argument that there are two existing ozone monitoring networks, and that they need to be streamlined and combined. The reality is that the system is already streamlined and optimized.

The parliamentary secretary has given her assurances that Environment Canada will continue to measure ozone in the upper atmosphere. What will happen to monitoring in the lower atmosphere?

I have one last question. How does the government plan to implement its newly announced oil sands monitoring program? The air quality monitoring component of the plan lists ozonesonde monitoring and aircraft measurements as major activities.

There is only one person who does ozonesonde monitoring, and that person has been notified that the position is under review. Everyone in the aircraft division has also been notified that their positions are on the chopping block.

Finally, we heard that the government will not close the World Ozone and Ultraviolet Radiation Data Centre. The reality is that the centre is one person sitting behind a desk with a computer and a telephone, managing the world's ozone data. The undisputed fact is that the centre's manager has received a letter saying that that job is in jeopardy, and that letter has not been rescinded.

In closing, the minister and his parliamentary secretary continue to repeat that ozone monitoring and the centre will not be cut. This is inconsistent with the known fact that the scientists responsible for the network and centre have received letters saying their jobs are in danger. Even the assistant deputy minister has told reporters that budget cuts being implemented will mean the ozone monitoring network will be reduced.

How can the claims of no cuts to ozone monitoring stand up to these truths? When will the government rescind the letters to these scientists so they can continue their work, which we all agree is valuable and necessary?



*Adjournment Proceedings*

**Ms. Michelle Rempel (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of the Environment, CPC):** Madam Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague for her questions and for her deep care for this issue.

We also care about this issue. That is why the Minister of the Environment has no plans to close the World Ozone and Ultraviolet Radiation Data Centre. Environment Canada will continue to measure ozone in the upper atmosphere. Time and again, the Minister of the Environment has made this very clear to the House.

The Government of Canada will maintain its delivery of sound science while remaining cognizant of today's financial constraints. To this end, Environment Canada will continue to ensure Canada has a strong track record in atmospheric ozone measure.

Canada has been on the forefront of the development of ozone measurement methods. Canadians pioneered numerous measurement methods that are now used around the world. For nearly half a century, Canada has been a world leader in atmospheric ozone science.

Since 1966, regular ozone measurements have been carried out at Resolute Bay. Recently a study emerged regarding ozone depletion in the Arctic that was recorded in the spring of 2011. This was reported in a peer-reviewed journal, *Nature*, to which Environment Canada scientists contributed. This government is proud of the contributions its scientists make to academic works.

Contrary to what the member opposite suggests, ozone monitoring remains a priority of this government. As measurement methods change and develop over time, so too must Environment Canada's strategy towards ozone measurements. This will allow Environment Canada to continue to monitor ozone matters, including the ozone depletion issue mentioned in *Nature*.

Environment Canada currently uses two methods to measure ozone: the Brewer network and the ozonesonde network. Our plan is to optimize and integrate these two networks. Implementing this plan includes a review of existing network sites in terms of their scientific validity, which will allow Canada to fully meet its requirements for surveillance of ozone holes and the chemical composition of the atmosphere.

By way of the World Meteorological Organization, the WMO, Canada shares its ozone network data with the rest of the world. The WMO supplies the data to other weather centres and agencies in the U.S. and throughout Europe. Furthermore, Canada has maintained the World Ozone and Ultraviolet Radiation Data Centre for years. Environment Canada is not cutting or closing the World Ozone and Ultraviolet Radiation Data Centre.

Environment Canada staff will remain dedicated to both the World Meteorological Organization and the World Ozone and Ultraviolet Radiation Data Centre, ensuring that quality results are achieved.

Just so it is crystal clear, Environment Canada will continue to measure ozone in the upper atmosphere and the World Ozone and Ultraviolet Radiation Data Centre will not be closed.

• (1850)

**Ms. Kirsty Duncan:** Madam Speaker, in light of the fact that a 2-million-square kilometre ozone hole has been discovered in the

Arctic and cuts are being made when we do not fully understand the ozone problem or the future of the ozone layer, will the government rescind the letters to the scientists?

I must also ask, was the government aware of the Arctic ozone hole when it decided to cut monitoring?

The government should have been aware of the research when it told scientists that their jobs were in jeopardy. The *Nature* article was accepted for publication in May and cuts were reported in August.

If the government was not aware of the research, why not?

Regrettably, instead of considering this urgent evidence, the government appears to have chosen to make cuts based on its own ideological agenda.

Finally, yesterday, the minister congratulated a scientist for his contributions to the *Nature* study.

Is the minister aware the scientist received a letter?

**Ms. Michelle Rempel:** Madam Speaker, Environment Canada will continue to measure ozone, maintaining its significant achievements in this area.

Canada's environment is a strong priority for our government. It remains a strong priority, even in tough fiscal times.

## CITIZENSHIP AND IMMIGRATION

**Mr. Don Davies (Vancouver Kingsway, NDP):** Madam Speaker, in recent weeks, the provincial nominee program in the province of Prince Edward Island has come under fire due to an alleged scandal involving bribery and fraud. Government workers have come forward to speak to the large amounts of money exchanging hands, potential political interference and a complete lack of accountability. This, of course, raises the issue of integrity in our immigration system.

All Canadians and all members of the House want to be confident that our immigration system is fair, transparent, accountable and operated with integrity. However, there are many aspects of the immigration system that cause Canadians to wonder if this is indeed the case in other programs as well.

The temporary foreign worker program comes to mind. There are serious issues of enforcement across our country where workers in Alberta, British Columbia or across the Prairies are working in conditions that violate our employment standards in those provinces. There is the possibility of exploitation of those workers, as we saw last year when an employer operated a lumber camp where workers were housed in deplorable conditions and treated far below the standards that Canadians have come to expect.

*Adjournment Proceedings*

We have immigrants who are not on the citizenship track through the temporary foreign workers program. I might point out to Canadians that we now have more temporary foreign work visas issued every year than we have permanent residents coming to this country.

What does it say about our country when we let people come to Canada, not to be part of our society, not to make a life for themselves and their families and not to become citizens, but for their inexpensive labour before we send them home after using them?

We have a backlog that has recently been confirmed by CIC officials to be over one million long. Wait times are unacceptable. We are telling the world that we want people to come here. We invite people to come make their lives in Canada. We need them to come here and build our economy but then we make them wait for years to come, or worse, years to bring over their family members.

There are good economic reasons to increase the number of permanent residents who we accept every year, especially in the case of family reunification. This would only bolster the integrity of our system.

With respect to wait times, it is not uncommon for people to wait 10 to 13 years to bring their parents or grandparents to our country. It is not uncommon to wait five to ten years to bring a skilled worker to this country. Part of integrity in any system is having faith that it can be operated in an efficient manner, and that is not the case right now with many parts of our immigration system.

Then there is the issue of consultations. There is a disturbing trend to the manner in which the government is developing policy. It claims to be doing wide-ranging consultations, however, many people and groups are left out of the consultation process. This was the case last summer. People who are not invited to consultations are told that they can submit an online statement. How can they feel confident that their views will be heard and acted upon? The minister toured the country seeking input about the levels of immigration our country should have and yet many groups and people were not consulted by the minister and their views were ignored.

Last week, the Minister of Citizenship, Immigration and Multiculturalism and the Minister of Human Resources and Skills Development announced that they would be doing consultations on temporary foreign workers in Alberta but the Alberta Federation of Labour is not welcome. It cannot get answers from the ministers.

Canadians want to know that we have good policies. Canadians want to know that our system is administered in a fair and efficient manner.

Live-in caregivers want to be reunited with their families and people who apply for temporary resident visas in this country want to ensure we have a fair program and a fair policy.

Canadians want integrity in the immigration system. I ask the government to assure Canadians and tell us how Canadians can have that confidence, not only in light of what has happened in Prince Edward Island but also with respect to the comprehensive immigration system that we have?

● (1855)

**Mr. Rick Dykstra (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, CPC):** Madam Speaker, I appreciate my colleague's comments. They are a little more wide-ranging than I anticipated. When I was asked to be here this evening, it was going to be a discussion on Prince Edward Island.

He obviously understands that the matter is under investigation and knows that I cannot comment on it, but I certainly want to comment that it is a little surprising to see that he wants us to get politically involved. I think that if we did that, he would be asking the exact same question as to why we are politically motivated to be involved in an issue that is in fact not being investigated by the government presently.

These are the facts. Individuals provided department officials at Citizenship and Immigration with new allegations and information regarding the provincial nominee program in Prince Edward Island. Department officials acted appropriately and responsibly and have forwarded those allegations to the RCMP. It is now up to the RCMP to look at the allegations and proceed accordingly.

As the RCMP is currently investigating this issue, it would certainly be inappropriate for me to comment further, and it would be irresponsible, quite frankly, to prejudge or interfere with that investigation.

I would like to remind my colleague that the government has acted on the provincial nominee program in Prince Edward Island in the past. If he recalls, in 2008 the government made changes to clearly forbid a passive investment program, and the immigrant partners program in P.E.I. was shut down.

P.E.I. introduced a new program in March of 2011 that complies with the federal immigration laws and its regulations. In order to qualify, applicants have to show that they will have an active role in the day-to-day management or operations of the business in which they are investing. The government has been clear that we will not tolerate another passive investment program, and any such applications will be denied. The focus of the provincial nominee program must be on bringing people with needed skills and entrepreneurship to the province and to our country.

As I have already said, the new allegations were provided to the department and forwarded to the RCMP. I hope the member will allow the RCMP to do the job that it is required to do.

● (1900)

**Mr. Don Davies:** Madam Speaker, it was out of the greatest respect and sensitivity to my friend's need to maintain some sensitivity about the fact that this matter is under investigation by the RCMP that I delicately tried to move this debate away from that particular issue and on to broader issues that I thought he would feel more comfortable talking about.



*Adjournment Proceedings*

In terms of the integrity of our immigration system, I think the official opposition has some positive proposals to make. We want to work together with the government to increase and speed up family reunification. We want to work to improve the visa process, in particular to add a visa appeal system so that we can get families here to visit their loved ones for weddings and funerals and momentous events. We want to make sure that we make our system more efficient by computerizing our system, as Australia has done and as the Auditor General has called for. We want to raise levels close to 1% of population and make sure we get more immigrants to Canada because that, after all, is how we built this great country of ours.

**Mr. Rick Dykstra:** Madam Speaker, we will do just that.

In fact, as my hon. colleague knows, for the next four to five weeks we as a committee will be studying the backlog. We will be looking at and determining issues we can present to the government to work through that backlog as hard as we can to eliminate it.

However, the decisions that are going to have to be made are not going to be easy ones, so I trust in the words I have heard from my colleague that we will indeed do our best to work together in an attempt to work through the issues, whether those be family reunification, foreign credential recognition, issues with respect to temporary foreign workers, or the issue that we have worked so hard on, and so successfully, on this side of the House with respect to highly skilled foreign workers. Put forward in the proper way, I think that is just one example that will lead to success in the backlog issue that we face.

[*Translation*]

**The Deputy Speaker:** The motion to adjourn the House is now deemed to have been adopted. Accordingly, this House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 2 p.m., pursuant to Standing Order 24(1).

(The House adjourned at 7:02 p.m.)

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HOUSE OF COMMONS  
CHAMBRE DES COMMUNES  
CANADA

# House of Commons Debates

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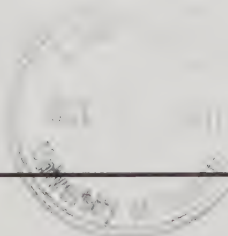
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OFFICIAL REPORT  
(HANSARD)

Wednesday, October 5, 2011

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Speaker: The Honourable Andrew Scheer



## CONTENTS

(Table of Contents appears at back of this issue.)



# HOUSE OF COMMONS

Wednesday, October 5, 2011

The House met at 2 p.m.

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## Prayers

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• (1405)

[English]

**The Speaker:** It being Wednesday, we will now have the singing of the national anthem led by the hon. member for Sackville—Eastern Shore.

[Members sang the national anthem]

---

## STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

[English]

### NURSING

**Mr. Greg Rickford (Kenora, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I rise in the House today to honour one of my constituents, Judy Carroll, for 40 years of nursing service in Sioux Lookout.

Over the past 15 years, Judy focused her career on cancer care and treatment.

Starting out in Sioux Lookout's small satellite chemotherapy unit, she played a pivotal role in the direction, administration and coordination of expanded cancer care and treatment in the Sioux Lookout zone. Nurses like myself, working in the many remote communities that the Sioux Lookout zone serves, appreciated that patients sent to Sioux Lookout for cancer care and treatment would be well cared for by special nurses like Judy.

She was active in Canadian Cancer Society events and this year was thoughtfully recognized for her years of dedication to oncology services. Judy retired this past summer and she is greatly admired and respected by her patients, their families, her colleagues and communities across the Sioux Lookout zone.

I ask my colleagues to join me in celebrating her nursing career. We extend best wishes to Judy on her retirement. She is another example of what is so great about the great riding of Kenora.

[Translation]

### COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS IN PIERREFONDS— DOLLARD

**Ms. Lysane Blanchette-Lamothe (Pierrefonds—Dollard, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I am proud to represent a riding in which there is such a variety of community organizations. They provide services for seniors, educational services and recreational activities in low-income neighbourhoods. They fight poverty, work with homeless youth and protect the environment.

Congratulations to all those who give their time and energy and who help enrich community life in Pierrefonds—Dollard. I am thinking, for example, of the dedicated employees of Projet communautaire de Pierrefonds, who have not had a wage increase in 20 years. One employee even took a pay cut so that the organization could carry on with its mission.

I would also like to acknowledge the work of West Island Community Shares, which is organizing a walk on October 6 to launch its fundraising campaign. This year's goal is to raise \$1 million for west island community organizations. Thank you in advance to all those who will donate or who will volunteer this year. I thank the activists who believe in the importance of the essential services provided by too-often underfunded organizations, such as those in my riding.

\* \* \*

[English]

### MENTAL ILLNESS AWARENESS WEEK

**Mr. Brad Trost (Saskatoon—Humboldt, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, this is Mental Illness Awareness Week in Canada, a week to raise awareness about the challenges of mental illness and to celebrate the fact that recovery is possible.

Mental illness directly affects millions of Canadians. Indirectly it touches us all. Though many of us know someone with mental illness, the stigma associated with the words “mental illness” is strong and deep.

Perhaps some people are wary of those with mental illness because it is an illness that they do not understand. Breaking the stigma and ignorance is one of the purposes of Mental Illness Awareness Week for as we break the fear we diminish the stigma.

### Statements by Members

This is also a week to support friends and family who deal with the burden of mental illness every day. We must understand that, just as with cancer and diabetes, recovery is possible.

This is also a week to remember those who did not win their struggle with mental illness. We remember them for who they were and not for the illness that consumed them. In their memory, we must challenge the stigma and open our hearts to our fellow Canadians impacted by mental illness.

\* \* \*

### CANADIAN BROADCASTING CORPORATION

**Mr. Scott Simms (Bonaville—Gander—Grand Falls—Windor, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, in 1936 the Canadian Broadcasting Act replaced the Canadian Radio Broadcasting Commission with a crown corporation known as CBC/Radio-Canada.

For three-quarters of a century, the CBC has contributed to the nation's history by broadcasting the great stories and events of this country, both regionally and nationally. Whether it is news, sports, entertainment or content for children and youth the CBC delivers stellar programming that reflects our national identity.

From *This Hour has Seven Days* to *This Hour Has 22 Minutes*, from coast to coast we are proud of the CBC. On our eastern shore we watch *The Republic of Doyle* from beautiful St. John's. On our western shore we fondly remember *The Beachcombers*. In the north there is *North of 60*.

The CBC has been a great reflection of who we are and who we will continue to be.

On behalf of the Liberal Party of Canada, we congratulate the CBC on its 75th anniversary and thank it for the important role it plays today. We wish the CBC all the best in the next—

**The Speaker:** Order. The hon. member for Prince Edward—Hastings.

\* \* \*

### AGRICULTURE AND AGRI-FOOD

**Mr. Daryl Kramp (Prince Edward—Hastings, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, autumn in Prince Edward—Hastings is a wonderful time of year. The scenery is nothing short of spectacular. I welcome one and all to our rolling farmland, pristine lakes and colourful hardwoods.

However, autumn is also a time of magnificent agricultural bounty thanks to the tremendous efforts of our farmers and their work and skill over the years. We can take a stroll through any of our farmers' markets and see many of the locally grown products of this fall harvest available, whether they be tomatoes, plump peaches, juicy apples, peppers or grapes.

William Pitt, first Earl of Chatham once said:

Trade increases the wealth and glory of a country; but its real strength and stamina are to be looked for among the cultivators of the land.

On that note, I would like to thank all our farmers and producers for all they do and all they contribute. It is because of their tireless efforts that we are able to partake in such delicious and nutritious food.

Anyone who ate today should thank a farmer.

\* \* \*

### ABORIGINAL AFFAIRS

**Mr. Romeo Saganash (Abitibi—Baie-James—Nunavik—Eeyou, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, yesterday Sisters in Spirit held vigils all across Canada including here on Parliament Hill. Thousands of people of all backgrounds gathered to honour the lives of missing and murdered aboriginal women and girls.

We in the aboriginal community have seen hundreds upon hundreds of our mothers, sisters, cousins, daughters and granddaughters fall victim to violence and disrespect. We must remember that these victims are not only ours, they are also the friends, neighbours, partners and co-workers of all Canadians.

As the duly elected legislators of this country, we must come together to end this scourge. We owe it to the 600 victims we remembered yesterday and their grieving families. We owe it to all the women and girls who have yet to fall victim. We owe it to people like our daughters.

As October is Women's History Month, we have a rare chance before us to act. We have a chance to change the course of history of Canada's aboriginal women. In that spirit, I call upon the government to call a full national inquiry to—

● (1410)

**The Speaker:** Order. The hon. member for Chilliwack—Fraser Canyon.

\* \* \*

### ROYAL CANADIAN NAVY

**Mr. Mark Strahl (Chilliwack—Fraser Canyon, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I rise today to salute Commanding Officer Jamie Tennant and the entire ship's company of the HMCS *Montreal*, the Halifax class frigate that has just returned from its Great Lakes deployment.

This annual event provides Canadians an opportunity to tour a navy vessel and discover career opportunities available with the Canadian Forces. I was pleased to sail with the *Montreal* at the beginning of the deployment as part of the Canadian Forces parliamentary program. I saw first-hand the skills and dedication necessary to keep a Canadian warship running. From the engine room, to the kitchen, to the bridge, each woman and man has a vitally important role and each does his or her job well.

My grandfather, Keith Bateman, served in the Royal Canadian Navy in the 1950s. I am pleased to be part of a Conservative government that has restored the "Royal" designation to Canada's navy.

From Halifax and Esquimalt to wherever we ask it to go today's Royal Canadian Navy continues to do Canada proud.



## ENERGY RESOURCES

**Mr. Bob Zimmer (Prince George—Peace River, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, it is with a great sense of gratitude that I rise today to thank the people of Prince George—Peace River, including my wife, kids and parents who are with us today, for entrusting me with the responsibility of representing their interests here in Ottawa.

To that end, local community and business leaders in my riding have made it clear that we must continue to promote oil and gas as a stable, secure and ethical source of energy.

Canada is fortunate to have an abundance of natural energy resources. In fact, energy represents roughly 7% of our gross domestic product and creates hundreds of thousands of direct and indirect jobs across this country.

In resource-rich regions like northeastern B.C., our government continues to support an industry that is creating jobs and economic opportunity.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

## WORLD TEACHERS' DAY

**Mr. François Choquette (Drummond, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, World Teachers' Day is held annually on October 5 to celebrate the essential role of teachers in providing quality education at all levels. In Canada, this year's theme for World Teachers' Day is "Teachers: Inspiring students, awakening potential".

There is more to teaching than simply transferring knowledge. You have to inspire the children, unleash their potential and give them a new way of looking at things. Teaching means helping students turn their dreams of a better world into reality.

I would like to encourage all the members of the House to demonstrate their appreciation for the wonderful work done by Canada's teachers.

\* \* \*

[English]

## PUBLIC SAFETY

**Mr. Brent Rathgeber (Edmonton—St. Albert, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, Canadians gave our government a strong mandate to keep our streets and communities safe. That is why our government urged the public safety committee to undertake a study of drugs in the prison system.

As we know, developing drug-free prisons was a key commitment that our government made to Canadians in the recent election.

However, not all seem to agree with this common-sense approach. In fact, at the invitation of the NDP member for Surrey North, the Canadian Association of Elizabeth Fry Societies appeared at the committee yesterday to push its soft-on-criminals agenda. Among other outrageous comments, this group stated that strip-searching inmates to ensure that they are not smuggling illicit drugs or other contraband is a systematic "sexual assault by the state".

## Statements by Members

Not only is this a slap in the face to our correctional officers and legally dubious, it is absolutely insulting to those who have actually been victimized by a sexual predator.

I call on the NDP to finally stop putting the rights of criminals ahead of the rights of law-abiding Canadians.

\* \* \*

● (1415)

[Translation]

## WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH

**Ms. Françoise Boivin (Gatineau, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, this year's Women's History Month recognizes the invaluable contributions made by women within our armed forces. Their sense of duty and tremendous courage are a true source of inspiration. Our country's social progress is linked to the battles and victories won by women over the past 144 years—women like Nancy Riche from Newfoundland and Labrador.

Even so, much remains to be done. Over the past two weeks, I have met with members of two aboriginal groups, Walk 4 Justice and Families of Sisters in Spirit, people who have been through the unthinkable. These people all have a daughter, mother, sister or cousin who was murdered. In their grief, they have joined forces in order to have their needs heard and to seek justice.

I encourage the government to meet with them, to listen to them and to support them, so that we can make history together by putting an end to violence against aboriginal women.

\* \* \*

[English]

## THE ECONOMY

**Ms. Eve Adams (Mississauga—Brampton South, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, Canada is number one. We are the best country for job-creating investment. *Forbes*, the influential business magazine, just said so this week. Canada is leading the way as the best country to do business. Our Conservative government is focused on what matters to Canadians: creating jobs and promoting economic growth.

*Forbes'* ranking of Canada as the best place in the world for business to grow and create jobs is yet another example of our global economic leadership. It declared that Canada's economy has held up better than most, praising our low tax plan for Canadian businesses.

However, Canada is not immune to the economic turbulence facing the global economy. That is why the Conservative government is working hard to implement the next phase of Canada's economic action plan and its job creating measures, like the hiring credit for small businesses.

The last thing Canada's families need now is the NDP's massive job-killing tax hikes that would cost jobs and hurt our economy.

*Oral Questions***NOVA SCOTIA ABORIGINAL MALE ATHLETE OF THE YEAR AWARD**

**Hon. Mark Eyking (Sydney—Victoria, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I stand in the House today to recognize Aaron Floyd Prosper, a 15-year-old Mi'kmaq student from the community of Eskasoni First Nation and a recent recipient of the 2011 Nova Scotia Aboriginal Male Athlete of the Year Award.

Aaron is a grade 10 honours student at Chief Allison M. Bernard Memorial High School and is the son of Floyd and Dawna Prosper. He began playing hockey when he was just four years old with Eskasoni Minor Hockey Association and then he moved on to Cape Breton minor hockey.

Aaron has a passion for drumming and is asked to perform at many events. His presentation of "Making of the Mi'kmaw Drum" won awards here in Ottawa. In addition, Aaron has been competing in golf and kick-boxing tournaments and he plays the piano. He has also developed his own workshop called "Talent is Never Enough".

Aaron has brought great honour to his family, his friends and community. He is a true testament of hard work and focus, and he is an inspiration to us all.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

**HIGHWAY INFRASTRUCTURE**

**Mr. Jacques Gourde (Lotbinière—Chutes-de-la-Chaudière, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, just a few hours ago, the Minister of Transport, Infrastructure and Communities announced that our Conservative government is committed to building a new bridge over the St. Lawrence, thereby launching the replacement process.

This new bridge over the St. Lawrence is vital to the greater Montreal area and will benefit Canada as a whole. This is excellent news for the many workers from Montreal's south shore who cross the existing bridge every day and currently have to deal with considerable traffic. This is also excellent news for the regional economy: every year more than \$20 billion in trade crosses that bridge.

The minister said that we will work with our partners and the private sector to ensure that the construction of the bridge is done at no additional cost to taxpayers. Again, as with so many other matters in Quebec, our Conservative government is getting things done.

\* \* \*

[English]

**MANITOBA ELECTION**

**Mr. Pat Martin (Winnipeg Centre, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, last night, the people of Manitoba made history. Not only did the NDP win its fourth consecutive majority government, we won more seats than any party in the province's history. The people of my province voted for leadership they can trust.

After 12 years of NDP, we boast the most affordable hydro rates in the country, the lowest unemployment rates in the country, the cheapest public car insurance in the country, and we have reduced the small business tax from 11% under the Conservatives to zero today. It is no wonder the good people of Manitoba voted to elect a

strong, stable, majority social democratic government in the province of Manitoba.

\* \* \*

● (1420)

**THE ENVIRONMENT**

**Mr. Brian Storseth (Westlock—St. Paul, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I was pleased to hear that Scott Vaughan, the Commissioner of the Environment and Sustainable Development, recognized our Conservative government's world-class oil sands monitoring plan yesterday.

Before committee yesterday, Mr. Vaughan confirmed that our government had already acted on the concerns highlighted in his report.

Given the report covered a period ending in mid-2010, it preceded the government taking action with the oil sands advisory panel report, which Mr. Vaughan praised for its ambitious 90-day timetable, while noting that the government has already met that timetable.

This past July, we took the next step by announcing the integrated plan for oil sands monitoring, a real plan that focuses on air quality, biodiversity and water.

Our government is working to ensure Canadians have clean water to drink and clean air to breathe for generations to come. Unlike the NDP, which is willing to sacrifice Canadian jobs, our government will balance the need to protect Canada's environment with the need to protect Canadian jobs.

---

**ORAL QUESTIONS****TAXATION**

**Ms. Libby Davies (Vancouver East, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, the Conservatives' reckless policy of corporate tax cuts has helped gut our country's manufacturing sector. The Conservatives do not mind helping profitable oil companies and the big banks just love the handouts, but there has been no benefit for the manufacturing sector, and now we have lost hundreds of thousands of good jobs. Nowhere is this more evident than in Ontario, with even Mr. Hudak saying as much.

Will the Prime Minister wake up, see the evidence and cancel his next round of pointless corporate tax giveaways?

**Right Hon. Stephen Harper (Prime Minister, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the government has been lowering taxes of all kinds for businesses, families and individuals. It is one of the reasons that Canada has a far better job creation record than most countries.



There are measures right now before the House of Commons to give specific tax allowances and specific tax breaks to the manufacturing sector. I would call on the NDP to support those and stop opposing good things for Canada's manufacturers.

**Ms. Libby Davies (Vancouver East, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, those tax breaks to the big corporations are not working. The economic plan of the government is a failure. Jobs are not being created, pensions are not being protected and the stock markets are falling. This is a recipe for another Conservative recession and yet the Prime Minister is stubbornly ignoring the evidence and will not change his ways.

The fact is that two million Canadians are looking for jobs. Why are they not the priority instead of the big banks?

**Right Hon. Stephen Harper (Prime Minister, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, we are concerned about Canadians out of work, which is why job creation is our priority and why we have the results to show for it.

What I do not understand is that when we put job creation measures before the House, such as the new tax credit for new hires and incentives for manufacturers, why the NDP, which apparently has no economic ideas at all to propose, just simply stands in the way and votes against these things for Canadian families.

[Translation]

**Mr. Thomas Mulcair (Outremont, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, the Conservatives' industrial and fiscal policies have benefited the big oil companies and hurt manufacturing industries, especially in Ontario, where hundreds of thousands of jobs have been eliminated in this sector. The way in which they are developing the oil sands, without including the environmental costs, has thrown our economy out of balance by artificially inflating the value of our dollar and hurting our exports. Workers in the manufacturing sector have been hit hard by the bad decisions of the Conservatives.

When will they restore the balance and put people back to work? That is a concrete suggestion.

**Right Hon. Stephen Harper (Prime Minister, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, unemployment clearly remains a difficult problem, but this country's job creation record is better than that of many other countries because of this government's economic action plan. The House of Commons has before it proposals that would create jobs: a tax credit for new hires and tax reductions for businesses and manufacturers.

I do not understand why the NDP opposes these proposals, which will greatly assist our businesses and our families.

\* \* \*

### CHAMPLAIN BRIDGE

**Mr. Thomas Mulcair (Outremont, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, today, the Minister of Transport, Infrastructure and Communities made a false comparison. The Autoroute 25 Bridge was completely new infrastructure in a location where there had never been a bridge before. The Champlain Bridge, on the other hand, is an existing vital artery for a city of four million people, the second-largest city in Canada and the gateway to the Maritimes.

### Oral Questions

From now on, hundreds of thousands of workers will have to pay to cross when crossing is currently free. Why?

• (1425)

**Hon. Christian Paradis (Minister of Industry and Minister of State (Agriculture), CPC):** Mr. Speaker, this bridge is a major asset for the country, and the commitment that the Minister of Transport, Infrastructure and Communities made today to build a new bridge is excellent news. The manner in which we will proceed with our partners and the private sector will ensure that the construction does not result in additional costs to taxpayers. That is what he is seeking.

The government's preferred option to ensure viable infrastructure for future generations currently involves tolls and a public-private partnership.

**Mr. Thomas Mulcair (Outremont, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, it is funny. Every time I hear the Conservatives talking about a public-private partnership, I get the impression that they really mean a partnership that will line the pockets of the private sector or one that will make the public pay.

Hundreds of thousands of people will pay out of their own pockets for a toll bridge when it costs nothing to cross the existing bridge. The government needs to tell the public why.

**Hon. Christian Paradis (Minister of Industry and Minister of State (Agriculture), CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the mayor of Montreal said:

In 2011, the development of any road infrastructure must provide sustainable and effective solutions in terms of mass transit. I also argued in favour of implementing a toll system in order to fund the bridge and speed up its construction.

I could also quote Michel Leblanc, Françoise Bertrand, the Conseil du patronat du Québec and others. We understand that the NDP does not do business with the private sector; perhaps it hates doing so. But we want to keep our promises and ensure that sustainable infrastructure is built for Canada's future generations.

**Hon. Bob Rae (Toronto Centre, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, there is no bridge and no plan. All we have is an announcement. There is a difference. The problem we see is that the Government of Quebec was not there for the announcement, and if there is a public transit aspect, it is absolutely essential to have the full co-operation of the Province of Quebec.

How does the Prime Minister explain this off-the-cuff announcement, which has nothing to do with a real plan or a real bridge?

**Right Hon. Stephen Harper (Prime Minister, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Transport, Infrastructure and Communities made a very important announcement for the greater Montreal area. This is crucial to this region's economy. I have seen very positive reactions from the mayor of Montreal, the president of the Conseil du patronat du Québec and the president of the Manufacturiers et exportateurs du Québec.

We will work with our partners in the public and private sectors to get the new bridge built.

*Oral Questions**[English]***CANADA-U.S. RELATIONS**

**Hon. Bob Rae (Toronto Centre, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, given the Prime Minister's notorious commitment to consulting this House, to transparency, and to openness, I wonder if the Prime Minister could give us his assurance today that, before any agreement with the United States on perimeter security is signed, the agreement will be tabled in this House and open to parliamentary scrutiny and debate.

**Right Hon. Stephen Harper (Prime Minister, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the actions of the government are always open to scrutiny and debate. Because the opposition loses the debate does not mean we did not have a debate.

The government is still in discussions with the United States. However, unlike the other parties, we think it is critical to the Canadian economy that we have trade with the U.S., we secure access to our market, and we ensure our mutual security.

I know the NDP is against that and the Liberal Party has no position on it, but these are critical things for Canadians.

**Hon. Bob Rae (Toronto Centre, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I did not hear an answer to the second question. Perhaps I could hear an answer to this one.

Could the Prime Minister explain why he would be signing this deal when the Obama administration is actively promoting buy America, which is in effect anti-Canada; when we are about to be hit with a ports tax in the United States, which again discriminates directly against Canadian economic interests; and when we still have not resolved the food labelling issue?

Why would the Prime Minister be signing this deal when all these issues are still very much on the table?

● (1430)

**Right Hon. Stephen Harper (Prime Minister, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, first of all, some of the things the leader said in his preamble are not correct. In terms of the specific negotiations with the United States, we do not have an agreement yet, but we continue to work on it.

Only a former leader of the NDP would say that when we face American protectionism, the solution to that is to cut our own access off to the American market.

\* \* \*

**PRESIDENT OF THE TREASURY BOARD**

**Mr. Charlie Angus (Timmins—James Bay, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, it is now 118 days since the President of the Treasury Board vanished in plain sight, and little wonder. He ran a homemade paper trail through his constituency office, conveniently beyond the reach of the Auditor General.

The Information Commissioner says that she is worried about the use of private e-mails to cover the tracks of ministers. The government is a black hole of accountability and the President of the Treasury Board is at the centre of this hole.

Will he stand up in the House today and explain why the Auditor General was misled?

**Hon. John Baird (Minister of Foreign Affairs, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the Auditor General had full access to all of the information pertaining to 32 public infrastructure projects that all benefited municipalities, provincial and community infrastructure. She came forward and made some observations on how we could do a better job to be even more transparent to Parliament, and we have completely accepted her good advice.

**Mr. Charlie Angus (Timmins—James Bay, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, if it were that simple the President of the Treasury Board would not need his big brother to stand up for him in the schoolyard every day.

This is about accountability. Accountable ministers do not try to pull a fast one on the Auditor General. Accountable ministers do not tell mayors to keep their mouths shut until they get their stories straight. Accountable ministers stand up in the House of Commons and explain themselves.

The Prime Minister knew the ethical lapses of the Muskoka minister. Why did he put the minister in charge of billions of dollars of taxpayers' money?

**Hon. John Baird (Minister of Foreign Affairs, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, here are the facts: 32 projects were supported by Infrastructure Canada; 32 projects were built; 32 projects came in on time and on budget; 32 projects all in the public sector are now at the disposal and benefit of the province, the community and municipalities in that region.

*[Translation]*

**Mr. Alexandre Boulerice (Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, if only the member for Parry Sound—Muskoka were capable of defending himself.

We have learned that the mayor of Huntsville is clearly embarrassed by the email exchange between him and the President of the Treasury Board.

Can the minister stand and explain to us how these emails prove that the Prime Minister's Office was involved? How they prove that the minister wanted to block a spending review? Does the President of the Treasury Board agree with the mayor of Huntsville that Bell Canada stocks will go up when politicians like him learn to use the telephone to hide their unsavoury activities?

*[English]*

**Hon. John Baird (Minister of Foreign Affairs, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I cannot speak to the issue involving the mayor of Huntsville.

This government expanded the access to information laws. We tried to bring more light and more accountability to public corporations like the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation and the Canadian Wheat Board. The first time in Canadian history a party stood up and voted to bring the cloak of darkness back on a public corporation and it was the NDP that did that with the Canadian Wheat Board.

*[Translation]*

**Mr. Alexandre Boulerice (Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Foreign Affairs must be starting to get really tired of standing and answering questions about his neighbour's emails.



The mayor of Huntsville learned his lesson: if you are planning some funny business, make sure you cover your tracks. The Information Commissioner is justifiably worried about that statement and the fact that the minister is determined to cover his tracks.

Does the President of the Treasury Board believe that he, too, needs to learn how to better hide the truth?

[English]

**Hon. John Baird (Minister of Foreign Affairs, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I never get tired of answering questions from the New Democratic Party in the House. It is always a great privilege to serve Canadians.

It was this government that expanded the access to information laws. There are access to information laws at the provincial and municipal levels. The fact that all of these e-mail exchanges were released shows just how open and transparent things are.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

#### INTERNATIONAL TRADE

**Mr. Mathieu Ravignat (Pontiac, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, once again, the United States is planning to impose a special tariff on Canadian businesses. This time, an extra \$140 will be charged on each container carrying goods from British Columbia when cargo ships dock in the United States. This news came to light on the eve of the announcement of a co-operation agreement between the two countries.

Will this government stand up to our American neighbour and refuse this latest attack on our trade interests?

• (1435)

[English]

**Hon. Ed Fast (Minister of International Trade and Minister for the Asia-Pacific Gateway, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, any new tax is a bad idea as it raises costs on consumers.

Canada's ports and railways are competing fairly. The Asia-Pacific gateway initiative that the member refers to is working as intended.

We will defend Canada's competitive advantage wherever it is threatened. I have made this clear to FMC Commissioner Lidinsky as well as to my USTR counterpart Ambassador Kirk.

**Mr. Mathieu Ravignat (Pontiac, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, first the U.S. slapped protectionist buy American provisions into the American jobs act. Now the Conservatives claim to be "monitoring the situation" while the U.S. moves forward with a punitive \$140 tariff on goods coming through B.C. ports. Seventy-five billion dollars worth of annual trade and 130,000 jobs are at stake.

Why is the Minister of International Trade letting the Americans run roughshod over Canadian trade interests? When will the minister start doing his job?

**Hon. Ed Fast (Minister of International Trade and Minister for the Asia-Pacific Gateway, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I would encourage that member to visit my part of the country to see what is actually going on there.

#### Oral Questions

While the member opposite engages in unhelpful rhetoric, both my parliamentary secretary as well as the chairman of the international trade committee are on the ground in Washington, D.C. today raising this very issue with their counterparts.

Unlike the member opposite, we will continue to promote Canada's competitive advantage and aggressively pursue the elimination of trade barriers.

**Mr. Brian Masse (Windsor West, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, the Conservatives are cutting border services to sign a \$1 billion perimeter security deal with the U.S.

From softwood lumber to the buy American act, every time the Conservatives negotiate a deal across the border, Canadians lose out, on jobs, the environment, natural resources and privacy.

The government has a proven track record of being very bad negotiators. How can Canadians trust the government? What is on the table this time?

**Hon. Ed Fast (Minister of International Trade and Minister for the Asia-Pacific Gateway, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, on May 2 Canadians gave the government a very strong mandate to focus on economic growth and the creation of jobs. Our focus is on removing trade barriers, not erecting new ones. I wish the member would join us as we stand up for Canadians.

\* \* \*

#### CANADA-U.S. RELATIONS

**Mr. Brian Masse (Windsor West, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, the government did not get a mandate to give away our sovereignty. Canadians do not agree with that.

According to reports, Canadian officials are heading to Washington this weekend to beg for the U.S. government to hold a public signing ceremony for the deal. The Conservatives cannot even negotiate a signing ceremony, but claim they can negotiate a good deal for Canadians.

Concerns have been raised repeatedly about protecting the privacy of Canadians and also the thickening of our border, yet the government is more worried about a photo op with Barack Obama. Why will the government not come clean on its secret security deal?

**Hon. John Baird (Minister of Foreign Affairs, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the government is committed to working for jobs.

It is committed to working with our American partners, with the Obama administration, to make it easier for jobs and employment growth. Reports that are in the media about a deal being accomplished are inaccurate.

Work on this important action plan is ongoing. When a final deal is reached, we will be sure to let the member for Toronto Centre know.

*Oral Questions**[Translation]*

**Mr. Sylvain Chicoine (Châteauguay—Saint-Constant, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister works harder for the interests of his American friends than for those of Canadian families. We learned today that the perimeter security deal between Canada and the U.S. will cost \$1 billion. Once again, this deal is not in the interest of Canadians. The government plans to use money cut from other programs to finance this deal.

Why does the Prime Minister want to pay for a deal that will benefit only the U.S. while cutting services offered here in Canada?

**Hon. John Baird (Minister of Foreign Affairs, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, no such deal has been signed with the Obama administration. The negotiations for the agreement are still ongoing. The NDP member has not seen the agreement, yet he is already against it.

*[English]*

We are pleased that the New Democratic Party has a renewed sense of keen interest in trade with the United States. We think that is great progress. We want to encourage the NDP to support even more free trade, not just with the United States but with countries right around the world.

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**THE ENVIRONMENT**

**Ms. Kirsty Duncan (Etobicoke North, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, based on the report of the Commissioner of the Environment and Sustainable Development, it is clear that the government is failing on climate change.

The government has lowered expected climate change reductions by 90% since 2007. If the minister believes that we are seeing the impacts of climate change, then why is the government failing so miserably on combating climate change?

● (1440)

**Hon. Peter Kent (Minister of the Environment, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the commissioner knows, as my colleague should, that the Kyoto protocol, which was one of the greatest blunders of the previous Liberal government, was in Canada's rear view mirror.

The commissioner recognized yesterday that Canada has new international commitments to the Cancun agreements and the Copenhagen accord. We do have a climate change plan. I am delighted that the commissioner recognizes it.

**Ms. Kirsty Duncan (Etobicoke North, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, what is in the rear view mirror is Canada's credibility.

The government is making cuts to areas such as climate impacts and adaptation, environmental assessment, and ozone monitoring. We do not expect these to be the last. The government is also cutting air quality measurements necessary for monitoring the oil sands.

How can the government deliver a comprehensive oil sands monitoring system when there will be fewer scientists to monitor it?

**Hon. Peter Kent (Minister of the Environment, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I am delighted to compare, any day, our government's record on the environment with that of the previous Liberal government, which did nothing but pay lip service to its professed commitment to the environment.

I would remind the member again, and I am disappointed that my colleague fails to recognize, the commissioner's positive words when he says, with regard to oil sands monitoring:

—the federal government has taken an important step forward by both acknowledging the deficiencies of the current system and setting out a detailed plan to fix them.

\* \* \*

**G8 SUMMIT**

**Ms. Judy Foote (Random—Burin—St. George's, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, today we learned that the mayor of Huntsville is embarrassed about the emails that he sent on the G8 legacy fund. Unfortunately, he is mostly embarrassed they left a paper trail leading right to the current President of the Treasury Board, documenting his abuse of power.

The President of the Treasury Board is too embarrassed to answer questions in the House, so will the Minister of Foreign Affairs confirm if he or any of his former staff have spoken with the RCMP about the legality of authorizing the use of border infrastructure funds for these projects?

**Hon. John Baird (Minister of Foreign Affairs, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I believe a defeated Liberal member of Parliament had a public election exercise in that regard.

I cannot speak for the mayor of Huntsville, but what I can say is that 32 pieces of public infrastructure were supported. All 32 came in on time and all 32 came in on budget.

We appreciate the work of the Auditor General and the good advice that she provided on how we can be even more open and more transparent to Parliament.

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**CANADIAN WHEAT BOARD**

**Mr. Pat Martin (Winnipeg Centre, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I am concerned that the Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food is deluded. He seems to think that he can dismantle a \$6 billion a year corporation like the Canadian Wheat Board without significant closing costs, even though KPMG predicts \$500 million in shutdown fees. He also thinks he can turn the complete grain marketing regime of the whole prairie economy on its head by August 1 and not disrupt the Prairies and the agri-food industry in the prairie region.

How could he be so deluded? I am seriously concerned that he might be taking a lead from the ostriches that he raises and he has his head in the sand about the reality—

**The Speaker:** Order. The hon. Minister of Agriculture.

**Hon. Gerry Ritz (Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food and Minister for the Canadian Wheat Board, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, there is a growing body of evidence that what is lacking on the Prairies is value-added industries.



*Oral Questions*

The member should probably join with the rest of the producers and processors in western Canada looking for ways to promote the farm gate and actually add value to it, instead of the political stunts that he prefers. They are just not performing well at all.

**Ms. Niki Ashton (Churchill, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, the port of Churchill and northern Manitobans will also feel the hit from the attack on the Wheat Board.

Farmers, workers and Canada's only deep water Arctic seaport are being sacrificed for the government's ideological agenda against the Wheat Board.

When will the government admit its move will hurt Canadians? Will it listen to Manitobans who yesterday overwhelmingly voted for a fourth-term majority NDP government which ran on saving the Canadian Wheat Board?

**Hon. Gerry Ritz (Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food and Minister for the Canadian Wheat Board, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, we recognize there are a number of issues that need to be worked out.

The Wheat Board is claiming credit for certain things it has never really had its finger on the pulse of.

Having said that, we are buoyed by the fact that the major farm group in Manitoba, Keystone Agricultural Producers, is working with us on building a strong future.

I prefer to work with the farmers of Manitoba than an NDP government that has gone past its best before date.

\* \* \*

●(1445)

**ABORIGINAL AFFAIRS**

**Ms. Linda Duncan (Edmonton—Strathcona, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, the environment commissioner has again reported on the abject—

**Some hon. members:** Oh, oh!

**The Speaker:** Order. The hon. member for Edmonton—Strathcona has the floor. Order.

**Ms. Linda Duncan:** Mr. Speaker, the environment commissioner has again reported on the abject failure of the government to require industry to assess the cumulative impacts of the oil sands on air, water, fish and wildlife.

Contrary to the recent outrageous comment by the Minister of Natural Resources that northern Alberta is uninhabitable, this area has long sustained first nations and Métis peoples.

Is anyone in the government willing to step up to the plate, restore the honour of the Crown and ensure aboriginal and treaty rights are not further abrogated?

**Hon. John Duncan (Minister of Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, my department officials have been working closely with the communities that are near the Athabasca oil sands to make sure the aboriginal interests are accommodated. Along with industry we have entered into many co-operative and collaborative arrangements. We continue to do that and we think that this is a good working arrangement.

**Ms. Linda Duncan (Edmonton—Strathcona, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, the commissioner also criticized the government for basing decisions about the oil sands on incomplete, poor, or non-existent environmental information.

The Alberta government has finally agreed to help finance a long overdue health study for at least two of the impacted aboriginal communities. Last I checked, this is a clear federal responsibility.

How does the government justify more tax breaks for the polluters while turning its back on aboriginal communities?

**Hon. John Duncan (Minister of Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, we are well aware of the work that the Alberta government has entered into. We think this is a good thing. This is a shared responsibility in many respects. We continue to work on a trilateral basis with the province and aboriginal groups. We think this is a good move forward.

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**INTERNATIONAL CO-OPERATION**

**Mr. John Carmichael (Don Valley West, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, on July 22 our government pledged \$50 million in additional support to those suffering from famine in the Horn of Africa, bringing Canada's total commitment to \$72 million. At that time, the minister also announced that our government would match eligible donations from Canadians until September 16.

Would the minister give the House an update on what our government is doing to help those affected by the humanitarian crisis in East Africa?

**Hon. Bev Oda (Minister of International Cooperation, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the member is quite right. Canada is doing its part to help the 13 million affected in East Africa.

Canadians again have shown their compassion and generosity. Individual Canadians have donated over \$70 million to Canadian organizations. As promised, the government will match their generosity through the African drought relief fund. This brings our government support to \$142 million to provide needed food, medicine, nutrition and clean water.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

**THE ENVIRONMENT**

**Ms. Megan Leslie (Halifax, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, as of last month, the Arctic Ocean's layer of ice had never been so thin. In his report, the environment commissioner said that the government's so-called action plan is not working. Programs are being cut and critical information is lacking. Climate change is a reality, but the government is in denial.

In three years there have been three reports and three ministers, but no action. Why?

*Oral Questions**[English]*

**Hon. Peter Kent (Minister of the Environment, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, our government complies fully with the reporting requirements of the Kyoto Protocol Implementation Act, but there is no obligation in this act for financial reporting.

The Government of Canada reports to Parliament on all expenditures related to climate change, for example, through individual departmental performance reports.

We will not file redundant reports. We will protect the environment and Canadians' hard-earned tax dollars. That is what we were elected to do.

● (1450)

**Ms. Megan Leslie (Halifax, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, we have seen the plan, and the plan is failing. Maybe the minister would prefer to talk about streamlining Environment Canada, or optimizing Arctic sea ice, or perhaps redistributing the hole in the ozone layer. However, the reality is that the government's out-of-touch environmental policies are putting Canadians at risk.

Will the minister get beyond his rhetoric and agree to all of the environment commissioner's recommendations for improvement?

**Hon. Peter Kent (Minister of the Environment, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the environment commissioner conceded before the House committee yesterday that his report was fully a year out of date. Unfortunately, my colleague had left the committee room at that point.

Again, I lament the fact that she fails to recognize the positive words the environment commissioner offered, both on our monitoring plans for the water, the air and the biodiversity of the Lower Athabasca and our commitment to the Copenhagen and Cancun accords.

We have a plan. He recognizes it.

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**OCEANS MANAGEMENT**

**Mr. Fin Donnelly (New Westminster—Coquitlam, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, Canada is falling way behind on its international commitment to establish marine-protected areas by 2012. The Pacific north coast integrated management area process brought together first nations, fishermen, environmentalists and industry to make a joint plan for stewardship of our ocean resources. The government invested in this process and then suddenly pulled the plug.

Why has the government walked away from a plan to protect the economic, social and environmental health of our oceans?

**Hon. Keith Ashfield (Minister of Fisheries and Oceans and Minister for the Atlantic Gateway, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, this government remains fully committed to developing an integrated management plan for the Pacific north coast by December 2012. Our goal is to develop a plan that is relevant and effective for the specific area, using an approach that is consistent with similar large oceans management areas. It is our intention to continue to work closely with first nations and the province of British Columbia, which have been valuable partners in the planning process.

**Mr. Fin Donnelly (New Westminster—Coquitlam, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, why does the government have such a hard time co-operating with others? The funding agreement was supported by all levels of government and first nations, but after lobbying from its oil patch buddies, the government suddenly announced it is walking away.

Everyone else wants a strong plan to protect our oceans. When will the government come back to the table and get serious about ocean management?

**Hon. Keith Ashfield (Minister of Fisheries and Oceans and Minister for the Atlantic Gateway, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, there is no question that we are responsible about ocean management. We have committed to the plan for the Pacific north coast by December 2012. We will make that commitment and work with our partners in the process.

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**NATIONAL DEFENCE**

**Hon. John McKay (Scarborough—Guildwood, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, this week we witnessed the sorry spectacle of a Lockheed Martin representative on national television saying that the F-35 is only going to cost \$65 million, engine included. Lockheed and the minister seem to be the only ones on earth who believe this. The congressional budget office and our own PBO have priced the figure at twice what the Lockheed Martin representative said.

The U.K., Australia, Italy, Holland and Turkey are all considering getting out of this program. Why is the government the only true believer left?

**Hon. Julian Fantino (Associate Minister of National Defence, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, all reasonable people agree that Canada needs aircraft in order to defend Canadian sovereignty. The current CF-18s must be replaced and our budget for the purchase of F-35s remains on track.

Let me be clear—

**Some hon. members:** Oh, oh!

**The Speaker:** Order. The Associate Minister of National Defence has the floor.

**Hon. Julian Fantino:** Let me be clear, Mr. Speaker. We will ensure that our men and women in uniform have the best equipment to do the job they are required to do safely. As responsible citizens, responsible politicians and responsible government, we owe them no less.

*[Translation]*

**Mr. Marc Garneau (Westmount—Ville-Marie, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, we know that Lockheed Martin is not allowed to sell F-35s in Canada at a lower price than in the United States. That is why the \$9 billion price tag bothers me so much. I do not see how we are going to buy these planes and all the support equipment. I can see only two possible outcomes: we are going to spend far more than \$9 billion or we will have to buy less than 65 planes.

Which option will this government choose?



• (1455)

[English]

**Hon. Julian Fantino (Associate Minister of National Defence, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, there has been a lot of noise made around this particular issue. This is an initiative that goes back to the days of the Liberal government.

We have maintained a constant effort to provide our men and women in uniform the best equipment they need to do the job we have asked them to do and get home safe and sound to their families at the end of their missions.

**Some hon. members:** Oh, oh!

**The Speaker:** Order. The member asked a question and I think the least all other members could do is allow the minister to answer the question.

**Some hon. members:** Oh, oh!

**The Speaker:** Order. If we are using up time on this type of disruption, we might not get to the full list of questions. I will give the minister a few seconds to conclude his remarks.

**Some hon. members:** Oh, oh!

**The Speaker:** He had sat down when I stood up, so I am just going to allow him to finish his remarks.

Order. We will have a little bit of order.

The hon. associate minister.

**Hon. Julian Fantino:** Mr. Speaker, I find it incredible that on an item as important as this to our Canadian sovereignty, the need to provide our men and women in uniform the tools they need as they are now engaged in such places as Libya, we hear this rhetoric about something that is so vital.

**Ms. Christine Moore (Abitibi—Témiscamingue, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, the Conservatives' stand on the F-35 purchase continues to take a nosedive. Last night the Associate Minister of National Defence contradicted his own minister and said the more honest and ethical approach would be to admit that the government does not know how much each plane will cost. They are just guessing.

We are talking about contracts worth billions. We know the Prime Minister does not talk to the Minister of National Defence. Is the Prime Minister also ignoring the associate minister?

**Hon. Julian Fantino (Associate Minister of National Defence, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, we have been consistent in our efforts. Our budget for the F-35s remains on track. This includes not only the aircraft but also infrastructure, parts, training, simulators, and so forth. It is the only machine that is going to provide us the kind of safety, security and sovereignty in our country that Canada requires at this time and in the future.

[Translation]

**Ms. Christine Moore (Abitibi—Témiscamingue, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, the F-35s will cost far more than predicted, but this government refused to admit it.

Six months ago, the government was talking about a \$16 billion contract. This week, the government came up with a figure of \$9 billion. Last night, the assistant minister for defence contradicted

### Oral Questions

his minister by finally admitting that the Conservatives have no idea what the grand total for the F-35s will be.

Why does the government not tell the public that \$9 billion for the F-35s is smoke and mirrors to hide the worst fiasco in military industry history?

[English]

**Hon. Julian Fantino (Associate Minister of National Defence, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the F-35 aircraft is the one item that is absolutely critical and helps to ensure that we will maintain our sovereignty well into the future. It includes not only the aircraft; it includes other components for years to come in the future, enabling Canada to be competitive and coordinated with our partners in NATO and the UN missions.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

### CHAMPLAIN BRIDGE

**Mr. Bernard Trottier (Etobicoke—Lakeshore, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, today the Minister of Transport, Infrastructure and Communities made an important announcement for the greater Montreal area, Quebec and the entire country. This morning's announcement is further proof that the Conservatives are delivering the goods throughout the country.

Can the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Transport, Infrastructure and Communities share the announcement with us?

• (1500)

**Hon. Maxime Bernier (Minister of State (Small Business and Tourism), CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased—

**Some hon. members:** Oh, oh!

**The Speaker:** Order, please. The hon. Minister of State for Small Business and Tourism has the floor.

**Hon. Maxime Bernier:** Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased today with the announcement by my colleague, the Minister of Transport, Infrastructure and Communities, respecting a bridge in Montreal because the people of Montreal and the surrounding area wanted a bridge. We have done it; we have responded to the people's expectations. In 10 years, people in the region of Montreal will have a safe bridge.

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[English]

### SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

**Mr. Ted Hsu (Kingston and the Islands, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, in the budget a targeted area of R and D under the eco-energy innovation initiative is advanced energy storage: batteries. The National Research Council is undergoing a big reorganization. Scientists are waiting to learn if they have a future at NRC, including lithium ion battery researchers, whose contracts are ending in a few months.

Would the government please encourage NRC to quickly clarify the future of this group to retain our scientific resources and align them with Canada's economic priorities?

### Oral Questions

**Hon. Gary Goodyear (Minister of State (Science and Technology) (Federal Economic Development Agency for Southern Ontario), CPC):** Mr. Speaker, no government in the history of Canada has invested so much in science and technology. The reason we are doing that is that discoveries, when they move to market, create jobs. They create better jobs. They create higher-paying jobs and improve the quality of life for all Canadians, and that is exactly what this government will continue to do.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

### PENSIONS

**Ms. Mylène Freeman (Argenteuil—Papineau—Mirabel, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, the government must take action to protect workers' pension plans.

In 2010, Fraser Papers in Thurso declared bankruptcy and 800 workers lost 40% of their pensions. The same thing is happening elsewhere in Quebec, Ontario and New Brunswick.

The NDP's policy is clear. Pensions represent earnings saved by workers and they must be paid in full.

How many workers will have to lose their pensions before the government will change the law to protect retirees like those from Fraser Papers?

[English]

**Hon. Ted Menzies (Minister of State (Finance), CPC):** Mr. Speaker, we actually did put forward legislation to help protect those pensions that the hon. member is referring to. We reformed the framework for those pensions that are under federal jurisdiction. As we all know, the federal government actually only mandates regulations for 7%.

We encourage the provinces to follow our lead to help to make sure that we protect those pensions that seniors expect to retire with.

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### PUBLIC SAFETY

**Mr. Kevin Sorenson (Crowfoot, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, our Conservative government is committed to keeping our streets and our communities safe. Part of that obviously means that we have a correctional system that actually corrects offenders. Our government has taken strong actions by improving offender accountability methods through the Safe Streets and Communities Act.

However, some so-called criminal rights advocates oppose this approach. Yesterday at the public safety committee, they spoke strongly against our Conservative plan to establish drug-free prisons.

Could the minister give this House his view?

**Hon. Vic Toews (Minister of Public Safety, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the work of the member.

Canadians gave our government a strong mandate to keep our streets and communities safe. Our government has a zero tolerance policy for drugs in our institutions. We reject suggestions from those who, like the NDP and its far-left comrades, continuously put the rights of criminals ahead of the rights of law-abiding Canadians.

We will continue to take action to fulfill our campaign commitment to ensure drug-free prisons.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

### HUMAN RESOURCES

**Mr. Robert Aubin (Trois-Rivières, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, once again, this government is demonstrating that when it comes to youth, it prefers to adopt a repressive approach instead of encouraging them to reintegrate into society. Every year since 2002, under the supervision of artist Jean Beaulieu, the Art-Go project has allowed 35 high school dropouts from the Trois-Rivières area to regain their self-confidence by learning how to make stained glass windows. Ninety per cent of the program participants go back to school or join the workforce. But this government has decided to cut funding to Art-Go at the same time as it is buying stained glass windows for the Senate.

Why is this government refusing to continue funding a project that works?

**Hon. Diane Finley (Minister of Human Resources and Skills Development, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, our government has done a lot to help youth develop the skills they need to enter the workforce. There are programs to teach them how to apply for a job, how to go through an interview and how to work in an office or elsewhere.

We will continue to help youth prepare for the workforce. These programs are very popular and, unfortunately, not all programs can receive funding.

\* \* \*

• (1505)

### SHIPBUILDING INDUSTRY

**Mr. Jean-François Fortin (Haute-Gaspésie—La Mitis—Matane—Matapédia, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, all economic players in Quebec, employers and workers alike, agree on one thing: Quebec's shipyards must get a significant chunk of the billions of dollars worth of shipbuilding contracts that the federal government is about to grant. Unfortunately, the only ones who refuse to take a clear stand on this issue in favour of Quebec's economy are the Conservative and NDP members from Quebec.

My question is simple: can that the Minister of Public Works and Government Services assure Quebec's shipyards that they will get their fair share of the government contracts?

[English]

**Hon. Rona Ambrose (Minister of Public Works and Government Services and Minister for Status of Women, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I would just remind the member that this is an arm's-length competitive process that is managed by the shipbuilding secretariat. It is the one that is evaluating the bids and it will determine the winners based on the merits of their proposals.



*Routine Proceedings*

As the member knows, the process is under way to select the winning shipyards. Neither the federal cabinet nor any politician will be involved in this decision, and this procurement is under the careful watch of two high-level interdepartmental governance committees, a fairness monitor and an international third party benchmarking firm. I should tell the House that to date the fairness monitor says that the process is fair and transparent.

\* \* \*

**PRESENCE IN GALLERY**

**The Speaker:** I would like to draw to the attention of hon. members the presence in the gallery of the Honourable Kenneth Marende, Speaker of the National Assembly of the Republic of Kenya.

**Some hon. members:** Hear, hear!

\* \* \*

**POINTS OF ORDER**

## ORAL QUESTIONS

**Mr. Costas Menegakis (Richmond Hill, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to bring to your attention Standing Order 18, which clearly stipulates that no member shall speak disrespectfully or use offensive words against another hon. member.

In my view, the member for Winnipeg Centre used words that were inappropriate in his question to the Minister of Agriculture. I would ask the hon. member for Winnipeg Centre to reconsider his words and perhaps apologize to the Minister of Agriculture.

**Mr. Pat Martin (Winnipeg Centre, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, if I was using words that were out of order or unparliamentary, you would have found fault with the words that I chose.

I do not believe the word “deluded”, in and of itself, is an insult. It means that someone may be misunderstanding, has a different opinion, or is missing the point. The fact that he may have had his head in the sand like an ostrich is not, in and of itself, an insult either.

I do not feel the need to withdraw these remarks unless you ask me to do so personally, Mr. Speaker. He has his opinion about what I said, and I have mine.

**The Speaker:** I did not hear anything unparliamentary at the time. I will look at the blues and see if there is a reason to come back on this to the House.

The hon. member for Sackville—Eastern Shore is rising on a point of order.

## CANADIAN ASSOCIATION OF ELIZABETH FRY SOCIETIES

**Mr. Peter Stoffer (Sackville—Eastern Shore, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, as you know, this is Women's History Month. All of us in the House should be judicious in the language and use of our statements on this while in the House.

Mr. Speaker, the hon. member for Edmonton—St. Albert has every right to his statements and he can attack the NDP any way he wishes. We do not mind that. However, when he goes after the Elizabeth Fry Society when it cannot defend itself, then I would encourage the member to say his exact words outside of the House to hear what the Elizabeth Fry Society would say.

The Elizabeth Fry Society, for many years, has been protecting the interests of women in this country. It has been protecting women who are incarcerated, many of whom are mentally ill and should not be in a prison. The Elizabeth Fry Society is known by all of us as one of the finest organizations. To be attacked in this House by any member is simply wrong. I ask the member to withdraw that statement.

**The Speaker:** I see the hon. member for Edmonton—St. Albert is rising. I do caution members that we do not extend question period with extra debate through points of order.

The hon. member for Edmonton—St. Albert

**Mr. Brent Rathgeber (Edmonton—St. Albert, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I stand by my S.O. 31. The record from yesterday's committee will reflect that I quoted the said society accurately and correctly and I stand by those statements.

**ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS**

● (1510)

[English]

**FOREIGN AFFAIRS**

**Mr. Deepak Obhrai (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 32(2), I have the honour to table, in both official languages, the Agreement on Bilateral Cooperation in Industrial Research and Development Between the Government of Canada and the Government of the State of Israel. It was signed in Jerusalem on July 10, 2011.

\* \* \*

**FISHERIES AND OCEANS**

**Mr. Deepak Obhrai (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 32(2), I have the honour to table, in both official languages, the Agreement on Port State Measures to Prevent, Deter and Eliminate Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated Fishing. This was completed in Rome on November 22, 2009.

\* \* \*

**SEARCH AND RESCUE**

**Mr. Deepak Obhrai (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 32(2), I have the honour to table, in both official languages, the Agreement on Cooperation on Aeronautical and Maritime Search and Rescue in the Arctic. This was completed in Nuuk on May 12, 2011.

An explanatory memorandum is included with each treaty.

*Routine Proceedings***ROYAL CANADIAN MOUNTED POLICE**

**Hon. Vic Toews (Minister of Public Safety, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to table, in both official languages, the Royal Canadian Mounted Police Services Agreement for the Provinces of Alberta and Saskatchewan, pursuant to subsection 20(5) of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police Act.

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**COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE**

## PROCEDURE AND HOUSE AFFAIRS

**Mr. Joe Preston (Elgin—Middlesex—London, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 104 and Standing Order 114, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the fourth report of the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs regarding membership of committees of the House.

If the House gives its consent, I intend to move concurrence on the fourth report later today.

\* \* \*

**HEALTH OF ANIMALS ACT**

**Mr. Alex Atamanenko (British Columbia Southern Interior, NDP)** moved for leave to introduce Bill C-322, An Act to amend the Health of Animals Act and the Meat Inspection Act (slaughter of horses for human consumption).

He said: Mr. Speaker, whereas horses are ordinarily kept as pets for sporting and recreational purposes, and whereas they are not raised primarily for human consumption, and whereas horse meat products for human consumption are likely to contain prohibited substances, this bill would stop the import of horses for slaughter for human consumption.

Since I first introduced the bill in the last Parliament, tens of thousands of Canadians have petitioned the government to legislate an end to this practice. It is time for the government to listen.

[Translation]

It is irresponsible of Canada to allow the sale of meat from horses that have not been raised according to the food safety practices required for all other animals. For example, there is the issue of phenylbutazone. Bute is a known carcinogen that is banned from use in any animal entering the food chain.

[English]

It is a health concern. There are substances that are not allowed by our rules to enter the food chain. By stopping the importation of horses from the United States, we would cut this down considerably.

I urge all members of the House to support my bill.

(Motions deemed adopted, bill read the first time and printed)

\* \* \*

**FEDERAL COURTS ACT**

**Mr. Peter Julian (Burnaby—New Westminster, NDP)** moved for leave to introduce Bill C-323, An Act to amend the Federal Courts Act (international promotion and protection of human rights).

He said: Mr. Speaker, I am happy to re-table my bill on corporate responsibility. This was formerly Bill C-354 in the 40th Parliament. The bill is called the international promotion and protection of human rights act.

This is an innovative bill which mirrors the U.S. alien torts claims act. It has given rise to a very healthy and ongoing debate in civil society. It has been developed in close co-operation with Nick Milanovic, who is the adjunct professor at the Department of Law at Carleton University, and Mark Rowlinson, counsel for the United Steelworkers. The bill has been endorsed by the Canadian Association of Labour Lawyers and many other civil society groups, experts and concerned Canadians.

The bill calls for extending the authority of the Federal Court system to protect foreign citizens against a broad range of human rights violations committed by Canadian and non-Canadian corporations and persons operating outside Canada. It would allow lawsuits in Canada for a host of universal human rights violations, such as genocide and torture, as well as activities that significantly destroy the environment or violate key international labour rights.

Canada's judicial system protects Canadians from abusive conduct by corporations or individuals and should no longer permit some Canadian corporations to violate human rights abroad. These continue to be committed abroad with impunity by some bad apples, some Canadian mining companies and other companies. This has an impact and, as a result, we need to ensure that we have a court system that responds to the needs of these foreign nationals.

The bill is an important step in expanding the jurisprudence to protect citizens living abroad from human rights abuses that take place. I hope the bill will get broad support from all members of Parliament.

(Motions deemed adopted, bill read the first time and printed)

\* \* \*

• (1515)

**EMPLOYMENT INSURANCE ACT**

**Mr. Scott Simms (Bonaville—Gander—Grand Falls—Windsor, Lib.)** moved for leave to introduce Bill C-324, An Act to amend the Employment Insurance Act (sickness benefits).

He said: Mr. Speaker, there seems to be an injustice that just does not want to correct itself and the government does not seem to want to move on this.

The bill deals with sickness benefits pertaining to EI benefits. Under normal circumstances, if people lose their job, through no fault of their own, they would get benefits that extend up to about 50 weeks in areas of high unemployment. With respect to sickness benefits, people need not just 420 hours to qualify, which are normally required, but they need 600 hours, which creates that discrepancy. On the other side, benefits only stretch up to about 15 weeks. My bill would extend that beyond the 15 week period.



Let us face it, if people are sick to the point where they need EI on a longer term basis, 15 weeks is severely insufficient.

(Motions deemed adopted, bill read the first time and printed)

\* \* \*

### RADIOCOMMUNICATION ACT

**Mr. Scott Simms (Bonavista—Gander—Grand Falls—Windsor, Lib.)** moved for leave to introduce Bill C-325, An Act to amend the Radiocommunication Act (voluntary organizations that provide emergency services).

He said: Mr. Speaker, I have always been quite inspired by the volunteer organizations, especially pertaining to emergency services: ambulance, search and rescue, and especially our volunteer firefighters across the region.

There are so many ways that we can help them save lives within their own communities. In my particular riding, I have 195 smaller communities. There are well over 50 brigades in the area. One of the things they want to do is to save money on certain aspects. One of the bigger fees they must pay is the radio communication licensing fee.

I again thank my colleague from Avalon who probably has as many, if not more, volunteer fire brigades in his riding, including volunteer search and rescue and ambulance services. What this particular bill would do is, “Notwithstanding paragraph 6(1), no fee may be charged for the issuance of a radio licence to a voluntary organization that provides emergency services”.

Again, I thank the organizations that spend their free time helping to save lives. This is a small measure but it is a great gesture to them for what they do for our smaller communities.

(Motions deemed adopted, bill read the first time and printed)

\* \* \*

### CANADA PENSION PLAN

**Mr. Scott Simms (Bonavista—Gander—Grand Falls—Windsor, Lib.)** moved for leave to introduce Bill C-326, An Act to amend the Canada Pension Plan and the Old Age Security Act (biweekly payment of benefits).

He said: Mr. Speaker, as is quite evident, I could not sleep much last night so I spent a lot of time doing my bills.

This is a very popular bill. I introduced it in the last session and I received a lot of positive feedback. The bill would allow people who receive the CPP or OAS monthly benefit to have an option, and I would stress it is an option to be paid biweekly, twice a month, if they choose to do so.

It is inspired largely by a provincial group of 50-plus clubs and pensioners in Newfoundland and Labrador. Year over year, they were passing this resolution within their organization where they wanted the option to be paid twice a month instead of just once.

It would be a good budgeting measure, especially for the younger seniors. This way, because it is an option, older seniors who live in homes can maintain their payment of once a month, which is also better budgeting for that particular institution that looks after them.

### Routine Proceedings

I am begging the government to seriously consider this as a good positive measure for seniors and their ability to budget.

I thank my colleague from Avalon, who is a great member. There is not much else I can say about him other than the fact that he simply inspired me. The fact that I stayed up all night to do this is also his fault.

(Motions deemed adopted, bill read the first time and printed)

\* \* \*

● (1520)

### NATIONAL LITERACY POLICY ACT

**Ms. Linda Duncan (Edmonton—Strathcona, NDP)** moved for leave to introduce Bill C-327, An Act to establish a national literacy policy.

She said: Mr. Speaker, it is an honour to have my bill seconded by the hon. member for Louis-Saint-Laurent, a wonderful colleague.

Today is a very auspicious day to table this bill because it is International Teachers' Day.

This bill, which would establish a national literacy policy in consultation with the provinces, businesses, unions, experts, media and the public, is intended to address the serious issue of literacy in Canada. The bill would impose a leadership role on the federal government to enable action in a coordinated way among all the parties that are already working in their individual jurisdictions. It would require the government to report to Parliament once a year on action that has been taken.

I wish today to recognize the efforts of volunteers across our country who are working to improve literacy in the country, including a number of Edmonton organizations: the Edmonton literacy coalition, the Centre for Family Literacy, PALS and the John Howard Society.

Four in 10 Canadian adults fall below the literacy requirement. By 2031, more than 15 million Canadian adults will have low literacy levels. Unless some action is taken to reverse this trend, it has been stated by OECD and a number of think tanks that we will face profound challenges for Canada's social well-being and economic prosperity.

Right now, 60% of immigrants have low literacy and among aboriginal people, including the Yukon, 69% of the aboriginal population in the Northwest Territories have low literacy, and 88% of Inuit. Of course, this is also affiliated with the fact that they are struggling to learn their own languages.

I look forward to the support of the House for improving literacy in Canada.

### Government Orders

(Motions deemed adopted, bill read the first time and printed)

\* \* \*

### COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE

#### PROCEDURE AND HOUSE AFFAIRS

**Mr. Joe Preston (Elgin—Middlesex—London, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, if the House gives its consent, I move that the fourth report of the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs presented to the House earlier today be concurred in.

**Hon. Ralph Goodale:** Mr. Speaker, I do not mean to withhold consent, but I do not have a copy of that report in front of me. Could the member confirm that this has to do with certain committee membership changes on behalf of the New Democratic Party? Is that the item that we are talking about?

**Mr. Joe Preston:** Yes, Mr. Speaker, that is what the report is.

**The Speaker:** Does the House give its consent to the motion?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

(Motion agreed to)

\* \* \*

### HOUSE OF COMMONS

**Hon. Peter Van Loan (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, this is on the subject of the parliamentary calendar. There have been discussions among the parties and we have arrived at a consensus. I would like to table a 2012 House of Commons calendar that is an alternative to the one that was proposed on Friday, September 30, pursuant to Standing Order 28(2). It is known as option C.

Therefore, I seek the unanimous consent of the House for the following motion. I move:

That, notwithstanding the calendar tabled by the Speaker on Friday, September 30, 2011, pursuant to Standing Order 28(2)(b), a new House of Commons Calendar for 2012 be tabled and that the said calendar be adopted.

• (1525)

**The Speaker:** Does the hon. government House leader have the unanimous consent of the House to move the motion?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**The Speaker:** The House has heard the terms of the motion. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

(Motion agreed to)

\* \* \*

### PETITIONS

#### ABORIGINAL AFFAIRS

**Mr. Paul Dewar (Ottawa Centre, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I actually have the signatures of thousands of constituents and citizens across this country who are petitioning the House of Commons and the government to bring attention to the issue of the "Stolen Sisters", as the campaign is known.

The undersigned residents of Canada draw to the attention of the House of Commons that it is important that the government acknowledge the responsibility of the federal government to establish a commission of inquiry to ensure there is a fully funded process to look at the issue of murdered and missing women in Canada, that we recognize in earnest the violence faced by aboriginal women and that they are actually given the tools they need to bring justice to this issue.

I table this petition and would ask that the government follow up on this as soon as possible.

\* \* \*

### QUESTIONS ON THE ORDER PAPER

**Mr. Tom Lukiwski (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I ask that all questions be allowed to stand.

**The Speaker:** Is that agreed?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

### GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[English]

#### KEEPING CANADA'S ECONOMY AND JOBS GROWING ACT

**Hon. Ted Menzies (for the Minister of Finance)** moved that Bill C-13, An Act to implement certain provisions of the 2011 budget as updated on June 6, 2011 and other measures, be read the second time and referred to a committee.

He said: Mr. Speaker, thank you for the opportunity to begin debate on the keeping Canada's economy and jobs growing act. This act represents a key component of the next phase of Canada's economic action plan.

Today's legislation represents an ambitious, substantive, and positive response to the economic challenges of today and the opportunities of tomorrow.

Indeed, the global economic recovery is challenged, as demonstrated by ongoing events in Europe and in the United States. While the roots of these global challenges are not from within our borders, they could nevertheless impact Canada. That is why our Conservative government has remained squarely focused on helping protect and grow Canada's economy to the greatest extent possible since the onset of the global economic turbulence.

In our initial response, Canada's economic action plan, we delivered \$60 billion in extraordinary investments to support jobs and growth during the worst of the global recession. It was a plan that helped families and businesses deal with the short-term challenges, while also supporting Canada's long-term prosperity through, for instance, landmark infrastructure investments in roads, bridges, universities, colleges, and many more.

It was a plan that, according to countless independent observers, worked.



As BMO economist Doug Porter publicly declared, it was, “arguably one of the most successful stimulus programs in the industrialized world”.

Earlier this year, our Conservative government built on that record of accomplishments with the next phase of Canada's economic action plan: a low tax plan for jobs and growth.

The next phase seeks to foster positive conditions for long-term economic prosperity, while staying on track to return to balanced budgets, while helping Canadian families.

The keeping Canada's economy and jobs growing act represents a vital component of the next phase as it implements many of its key elements. For instance, the act would promote job creation and economic growth by: providing a temporary hiring credit for small business, to encourage additional hiring; expanding tax support for clean energy generation, to encourage green investments; extending the mineral exploration tax credit for flow-through share investors by one year to support Canada's mining sector; simplifying customs tariffs in order to facilitate trade and lower the administrative burden for businesses; extending the accelerated capital cost allowance treatment for investments in productivity-improving machinery and equipment for Canada's manufacturing sector; and eliminating the mandatory retirement age for federally regulated employees in order to give older workers wishing to work the option to remain in the workforce.

The act would support communities from coast to coast to coast by: legislating a permanent annual investment of \$2 billion in the gas tax fund to provide predictable long-term infrastructure funding for municipalities; enhancing the wage earner protection program to cover more workers affected by employer bankruptcy or receivership; introducing a volunteer firefighters tax credit for volunteer firefighters; and increasing the ability of Canadians to give more confidently to legitimate charities, by helping combat fraud and other forms of abuse by illegitimate charities.

The keeping Canada's economy and jobs growing act would help families by: introducing a new family caregiver tax credit to assist caregivers of all types of infirm, dependent relatives; removing the limit on the amount of eligible expenses caregivers can claim for their financially dependent relatives under the medical expense tax credit; and introducing a new children's arts tax credit for programs associated with children's arts, cultural, recreational and developmental activities.

The act would invest in education and training by: forgiving loans for new doctors and nurses in underserved rural and remote areas; helping apprentices in the skilled trades, as well as workers in regulated professions, by making occupational trade and professional examination fees eligible for tuition tax credit; improving federal financial assistance for students; and making it easier to allocate registered education savings plan assets among siblings, without incurring tax penalties or forfeiting Canada education savings grants.

• (1530)

Finally, it would respect taxpayers by: phasing out the direct subsidy for political parties and closing numerous tax loopholes that

allow a few businesses and individuals to avoid paying their fair share of tax.

The keeping Canada's economy and jobs growing act includes so much more to help families, students, businesses, seniors, communities and obviously the economy and jobs. To keep Canada's economy on the right track, I am confident that Parliament will endorse today's legislation in a timely and overwhelming manner.

Before spotlighting a couple of the numerous and very positive measures in today's legislation, let me underline that, while indeed the global economy is in a period of turbulence and there are challenges that lie ahead, Canada has performed relatively well. Over the course of the debate on the keeping Canada's economy and jobs growing act, the opposition, NDP and Liberals, will attempt, in the starkest terms and with the greatest hyperbole, to talk down the Canadian economy with its non-stop negativity.

The NDP and Liberals will downplay the achievements of our businesses, our workers and our government that have in recent years made our economy stronger and more competitive. Carried by the weight of the heavy pessimism in their overstated rhetoric and tired talking points, the NDP and the Liberals will throw their collective hands up and claim that Canada has not been up to the challenges of the global economy.

That is where we on this side of the House must differ. As Winston Churchill once noted, “The pessimist sees difficulty in every opportunity. The optimist sees the opportunity in every difficulty”. Without a doubt, our Conservative government has seen, and sought to capitalize on, the opportunities and global economic turbulence of recent years. Unlike the NDP and the Liberals, we have believed that Canada and Canadians could meet that challenge, especially with the support of our low tax pro-growth economic policies.

Let me say it once again for the opposition. The facts are indisputable. Canada is standing tall.

On economic growth, both the IMF and the OECD forecast that we will have among the strongest economic growth in the G7 in the years ahead.

On jobs, Canada has the strongest job creation record in the G7 with nearly 600,000 net new jobs created since July 2009, with over 80% of those being full-time jobs.

On our financial sector, the World Economic Forum has, for the fourth straight year, rated our banking system the best in the world.

On our fiscal situation, Canada has, and will continue to have, by far the lowest total government net debt to GDP ratio in the entire G7 based on IMF projections.

### Government Orders

On fiscal and economic fundamentals, Canada's credit rating, unlike numerous other countries, has been affirmed as being the highest possible by major rating agencies. Indeed, Moody's recently renewed Canada's triple A credit rating, praising our "economic resiliency, very high government financial strength, and a low susceptibility to event risk".

On our competitiveness, *Forbes*, the influential business magazine, ranked Canada as the best country in the world for business to grow and create jobs, largely due to our low tax plan for Canadian businesses.

The list goes on.

There is little wonder that *The Economist* and global leaders have singled out Canada's economy and our Conservative government's economic leadership for repeated praise. BMO economist, Doug Porter, testifying before the finance committee this last week, declared, "—compared to policy making in the rest of the world, Canada's economic policy-making has been exemplary. I don't think there has been a significant misstep in recent years".

● (1535)

We recall the words of U.K. Prime Minister David Cameron uttered before this chamber:

In the last few years, Canada has got every major decision right. Look at the facts...Your economic leadership has helped the Canadian economy to weather the global storms far better than many of your international competitors.

As encouraging and positive as those facts and quotes may be, they should not serve as an invitation to rest on our laurels, especially in the light of the ongoing global economic turmoil in the EU and United States.

We all know resting on our laurels is no way to stay ahead. That is why, as I mentioned previously, our Conservative government remains focused on what matters to Canadians: creating jobs and promoting economic growth through the implementation of the next phase of Canada's economic action plan outlaid in today's legislation.

As I mentioned, the keeping Canada's economy and jobs growing act is a very substantive piece of legislation at over 640 pages. While there is no way I can spotlight each and every great measure in the bill, I would like to spotlight a couple of them, one of which garnered strong attention to date, and another that some have overlooked.

First, I would like to talk about a measure that has garnered pretty strong attention, that being the new volunteer firefighters tax credit and what it means for communities across Canada. Every day, without hesitation, volunteer men and women across Canada put their lives on the line to protect our families from harm.

Canada is incredibly fortunate to have volunteer firefighters across this country who are willing to put themselves at risk to protect the lives and the property of their fellow Canadians.

Our Conservative government is proud of these brave men and women who volunteer their time in the service of their and our communities.

While there is no way we can every truly repay them, we can show them we value all of the nearly 85,000 volunteer firefighters who keep our communities safe. That is why I am proud that we have proposed the volunteer firefighters tax credit in this legislation. It will help volunteer firefighters by providing them with a 15% non-refundable tax credit of \$3,000.

Day after day, volunteer firefighters play a vital role in serving our communities. By helping these brave men and women, our government is working to make Canadian cities and towns safer.

I should note that this new tax credit has been received extremely positively. In fact, the Canadian Association of Fire Chiefs declared:

This measure will help with the recruitment and retention of volunteer firefighters across the country, which will in turn help protect Canadians and our communities.

The *Charlottetown Guardian* editorial remarked:

For all the time they devote to training and responding to fires in communities across the country, our volunteer firefighters deserve that much...it's a gesture of appreciation for the work our firefighters do for Canadians.

Second, and lastly, I would like to briefly talk about a measure that has not received a lot of attention: tax relief to help apprentices in the skilled trades and workers in regulated professions with the cost of occupational trade and professional examination fees.

As we all know, apprentices in the skilled trades must complete certification exams at the end of their apprenticeship to practice their trade. Likewise, students in fields like nursing, medicine, law and accounting are also required to complete examinations to practice their occupations.

Until now, the cost of these certification examinations were generally not eligible for tax relief. The keeping Canada's economy and jobs growing act will now make all occupational trade and professional examination fees eligible for the tuition tax credit where the examination is required to obtain a professional status, certification or licence in a trade recognized by federal or provincial law that allows the individual to practice that profession or trade within Canada.

Examples of eligible occupations, trades and professions include: architects, machinists, bakers, bricklayers, carpenters, chartered accountants, dental technicians, hair stylists, motor vehicle body repairers, welders and much more. In fact, it is estimated that more than 30,000 individuals would benefit just this year.

● (1540)

The new tax relief for certification examinations builds on other measures the government has introduced since 2006 for students and those helping to improve their own skills. This includes the apprenticeship incentive grant and the apprenticeship completion grant under which eligible apprentices could receive up to \$4,000 which can be used to pay for tuition, travel, tools or other expenses.

I should also note that this new measure was also very well-received. Engineers Canada has applauded it and has stated:



"Making professional examination fees eligible for the Tuition Tax Credit... demonstrates a real commitment to fostering the highly-skilled, and qualified talent the country needs to compete....It will help in the pursuit of a strong, diverse, and modern economy."

The Canadian Home Builders' Association stated that the measure would "target a very important issue—the shortage of skilled people in our industry".

Those are two of the countless measures in the Keeping Canada's Economy and Jobs Growing Act that are positive and should be supported unanimously by Parliament. The NDP and Liberal members have opposed the many positive measures that we have put forward in this legislation. Their constituents and I would be interested in hearing their explanations why.

[Translation]

**Mr. Pierre Dionne Labelle (Rivière-du-Nord, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I listened carefully to the speech by my Conservative colleague.

At no point did he mention the debt levels of Canadian families, which are among the highest in the OECD. I would like to hear what my colleague has to say about this.

Are there any measures planned to help families increase their purchasing power? I know that there is talk of a toll bridge, but these measures will not really help people increase their purchasing power.

[English]

**Hon. Ted Menzies:** Mr. Speaker, I appreciate that the hon. member was not here for budgets 2010, 2009, 2008 and many budgets cumulatively since 2006, every one of which his party opposed, but we actually reduced taxes for a Canadian family of four by over \$3,000. That means every family of four has \$3,000 more to spend on what it wants. Whether families spend it on their children or their children's education is their choice. We have taken away the prerogative of their having to send it to Ottawa because we think it is better taken care of in the pockets of Canadian families.

• (1545)

**Hon. John McCallum (Markham—Unionville, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the tax credits that are contained in the budget are non-refundable. That means that the benefit of the tax credit is subtracted from the income tax a person pays. However, a person with a low income who pays little or no income tax would get absolutely no benefit. This means the government has deliberately excluded low income Canadians from any benefit contained within those tax credits. Therefore, in the case of the children's arts tax credit, children of low income households need not apply. They will not get anything. As well, low income volunteer firefighters would get nothing at all.

Regarding the family caregiver tax credit, people who have low incomes or who quit their jobs to stay home to look after someone who is sick and therefore no longer have an income would again receive nothing.

It is unconscionable that Canadians with the lowest income are deliberately excluded from these benefits. I know the minister is a decent fellow, coming from the Progressive Conservative wing of his party. I cannot understand how he could possibly support these tax

### *Government Orders*

credits which benefit all Canadians except those with the lowest incomes and the most vulnerable.

**Hon. Ted Menzies:** Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the accolades from the member opposite. He and I sat on the finance committee and discussed many important issues, including many of the most recent budgets.

In fact, since 2006 when we formed the government we have taken nearly a million Canadians off the tax roll. We have reduced taxes for that many Canadians. We want to help and want to support every Canadian. We have done that. We have reduced their cost of living.

We know that the NDP wants to raise taxes by \$10 billion. I am not sure what the hon. member's party is suggesting we should do.

We believe it is very important to leave hard-earned money in the pockets of Canadians. We have reduced taxes for all Canadians so that they will have an opportunity to participate in these programs we are supporting.

**Ms. Peggy Nash (Parkdale—High Park, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, the hon. member opposite made one statement that is a little perplexing.

He talked about the New Democratic Party wanting to raise taxes by \$10 billion. Given that we have absolutely no proposals to raise taxes by \$10 billion, can the hon. member explain where this figure comes from?

**Hon. Ted Menzies:** Mr. Speaker, the number comes from a cumulative effect. In the last Parliament the NDP was supporting raising taxes on businesses for EI. I think the term that was used was "a 45-day work year", which would cost a lot of money. That would hurt businesses. It would be a tax on Canadians.

The NDP wants to tax the oil sands in my province. I take it personally when the NDP attacks the producer of clean energy in my province of Alberta that generates incredible wealth that is spread across this country. The NDP wanted to put a tax on that. The NDP wanted an iPod tax.

I do not think it is \$10 billion. It is probably higher. I stopped at \$10 billion, but I can go further.

• (1550)

**Mr. Mark Warawa (Langley, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, it is good to be reminded of good things as well as the low tax programs of the government.

Has the member ever seen a time when the NDP or the Liberal Party have not wanted to have tax increases?

If we look at the GST, when a Liberal member said that we should do something for the people who are struggling with their finances our government promised to lower the GST from 7% to 6% to 5%.

I would ask the member about the history of the NDP. Did the NDP support it? Did the Liberals support it? Has there ever been a tax they did not want to increase?

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**Hon. Ted Menzies:** Mr. Speaker, the short answer is that I do not think the NDP has ever met a tax it would not like to raise. We have some contradictory taxes. The NDP voted not once but twice in the House against lowering the GST for Canadians, which was a very popular measure.

Then in Nova Scotia the NDP increased the GST by 2%. In B.C. the NDP was opposed to the GST. Then it applauded our settling the negotiation with Quebec on the HST.

I rest my case. The NDP loves every tax it can raise.

**Hon. John McCallum:** Mr. Speaker, as the minister said, it is true that BMO economist Douglas Porter said nice things about the government.

However, he neglected to say that Douglas Porter's boss, Sherry Cooper, the chief economist at BMO, blasted the government, likening it to Herbert Hoover who put contractionary measures in place during the Depression and made the Depression worse. Sherry Cooper says that the government should not make cuts and should not increase EI premiums at this time.

The government is planning a 5.6% increase in employment insurance premiums starting in January of next year. This is a job destroying tax coming in at a time when we are concerned about the risk of a recession and when the global economy is in great turmoil.

How does the minister justify raising employment insurance premiums by 5.6% at this time?

**Hon. Ted Menzies:** Mr. Speaker, I can quite easily justify a marginal increase in the cost of EI because we decided not to pick the pockets of labour as was done under the previous Liberal government, of which my colleague was a member.

The old adage "When we got there the cupboard was bare" is appropriate for the EI fund. The Liberals managed to take \$60 billion out of the contributions of businesses and employees and squander it on their own political nest egg. That is why we have to get a handle on EI premiums.

**Ms. Peggy Nash (Parkdale—High Park, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to add a bit of reality to this debate following on the hon. member opposite.

Let me begin with a recent report published in Toronto, Canada's largest city. It is a report called "Vital Signs". It documents the transformation that is taking place in many Canadian cities but especially in Canada's largest city.

The report talks about a dramatic reduction in quality of life which could affect almost half the population of the city over the next 10 to 15 years. It does offer some good news. It claims that the quality of life for Torontonians is improving when it comes to the environment. Toronto is a healthier city. Its crime rates are lower than ever before, which is significant. However, it indicates that there are huge challenges which range from affordable housing to public transit.

I want to share a significant point with the members opposite: the gap between the rich and the poor in Toronto and in many other cities is growing. As well, skilled immigrants are twice as likely to face unemployment than workers born in Canada and when skilled immigrants are hired they usually receive about half the annual

salary of other workers. During the period of growth from 1998 to 2007, one-third of the income growth across Canada went to 1% of the wealthiest Canadians, those averaging incomes of more than \$400,000 a year. The country is becoming increasingly divided and that is what is playing out in our largest city.

Child poverty rates have increased by more than 40% in one year. As a result of the lack of investment in urban transit and transit infrastructure, lower income residents in Toronto live in what is being called transit deserts. They spend an hour a day on average trying to get from one part of the city to another and spend a greater portion of their income trying to get there.

Canadians need governments for affordable housing, transit, social connections, to get to jobs and for opportunities. Journalist Royson James reported that just when they need it most, our civic institutions and governments are looking to withdraw from the field. In other words, governments are withdrawing money. I use that as an introduction to my remarks.

In spite of the member opposite's glowing report on Bill C-13, this legislation represents what I assume are the government's best efforts to cope with Canada's current economic dilemma, but it is a disturbingly inadequate effort. I want to enter a few facts into this argument.

The government likes to pretend that we are in a recovery, but as this report indicates, two million Canadians would work if there were jobs available for them. The report makes it clear that talk of recovery not only is misleading but is dishonest when it comes to these Canadians who are unemployed or underemployed.

We have a continuing recession in the jobs market. Unemployment is far above what it was in the last recession. Job creation is well below what is needed just to maintain a steady employment. The government claims to have created 600,000 net new jobs, and it keeps repeating that number, but the facts clearly indicate otherwise.

• (1555)

We have seen the addition of barely 200,000 new jobs since before the recession in May 2008, but the labour force has grown by 450,000 since then. Therefore, we are short a quarter of a million jobs just to keep employment steady. This is nothing to brag about, but the government, instead, misleads Canadians rather than have an honest, open debate about where we need to go and how we put plans in place to get people back to work.

[Translation]

It is a fact that the job market is currently more fragile than it was before the October 2008 crisis. The unemployment rate has risen to 7.3%, while the number of part-time workers and the number of workers looking for full-time employment have increased very rapidly.



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Quality, full-time jobs that allow families to make a living are very hard to find in many regions of the country.

Moreover, the actual unemployment rate, which includes discouraged workers who have left the labour force and part-time workers who would like to be working full-time, was 11.1% in July 2011, a very significant increase over the July 2009 rate of 9.4%.

● (1600)

[English]

Youth employment really is a disaster in this country. It really is quite shocking. The fact is that at the high point in May 2008 before the recession, 2.6 million Canadians between the ages of 15 and 24 had jobs, the participation rate was about 67.6% and the official unemployment rate about 11.9%. However, in August 2011, there were only 2.4 million 15 to 24-year-olds employed, the participation rate had fallen three percentage points and unemployment was at 14%.

This means there are almost 127,000 fewer jobs for 15 to 24-year-olds, 127,000 fewer jobs than before the recession. If we take the lower participation rate into account, in other words, a lot of people have just stopped looking, we would recognize that there are about 134,000 fewer jobs at the same participation rate.

Another fact is that the true measure of the jobs deficit for young people compared to May 2008 is about 260,000 jobs that were missing. Of course, another 85,000 young people have joined the labour force since May 2008, so there are even more young people looking for work. There are no net new jobs here, contrary to what the government says, just a gaping hole for young people to fall into and an enormous short and long-term loss to the economy.

[Translation]

The IMF recently predicted that Canada's unemployment rate will rise this year and in 2012 because our economy is growing far more slowly than anticipated.

In reality, real GDP growth of 2.5% annually is needed just to maintain the status quo, and growth has been much weaker since the start of the great recession.

It is a fact that economists everywhere have lowered their forecasts with regard to Canada's economic growth. Scotiabank economists have stated that we are facing a very real possibility that the Canadian economy could be the first to fall into a recession.

The BMO deputy chief economist has noted that even if Canada and the U.S. are able to avoid another recession, Ottawa will not achieve the rate of economic growth projected in the budget.

The budget was based on growth projections that are no longer realistic.

[English]

Another claim that the Minister of Finance and the Prime Minister tend to make is that the economic fundamentals of the Canadian economy are great. Let us examine that.

An economy depends on four key economic drivers for growth: private business spending and investment, consumer spending, exports, and the public sector.

The government has pinned all of its hopes on the private sector, spending billions of public revenues on rolling back corporate taxes. The result: very little investment, very little job creation. In fact, Canadian corporations are sitting on \$500 billion in cash rather than spend or invest it. Of that, \$120 billion has come from the government's no strings attached corporate tax cuts. That is \$120 billion.

It is a fact that the combined federal and Ontario corporate tax rates were slashed from 45% in 1999 to 30% in 2010. That is a drop of 15%. Over the same period, investment in machinery and equipment fell from just over 8% to just over 5% of the province's gross domestic product. Therefore, a measure designed to increase investment and productivity in machinery failed. In fact, investment fell even though taxes were cut and we were shovelling over \$100 billion back into corporate profits.

So much for the claim that corporate income tax giveaways boost business investment and job creation. Worse still, the government's response, illogical as it seems, is to just stay the course and waste more money on further tax cuts. Brilliant.

Instead of patting itself on the back because we are doing relatively better than some very sick economies, the government must put in place policies that encourage private sector investment in our economy here at home over the long-term. This budget is full of temporary half measures when long-term strategic action is needed.

We all know what happened to the second economic driver, consumer spending. There is a growing inequality in the distribution of income in this country, and I just cited one study. This is an inequality the government does not seem to worry or care about, but it means that Canadians have had to borrow to spend on essentials, and borrow they have. Canadians have never been more indebted; an average household owes 150% of its income.

We cannot count on overstrapped consumers to get us out of this mess. Consumer spending is tapped out. That is not the solution.

This summer the IMF published a study on inequality. It found that the more equitably incomes are distributed, the longer and more stable are periods of economic growth. The more equality, the longer the periods of economic growth. Even so, this budget does nothing to address inequality in Canada.

As for exports, the third driver, the IMF projects that Canada's balance of payments, deficit, as a percentage of GDP is on its way to becoming one of the worst among advanced economies; worse than that of the U.S. and soon to be worse than Italy or Spain.

The IMF predicts that our current account deficit will reach almost 4% of GDP in 2012. That is a major negative on our economy. However, we would never hear the government mention this piece of bad news.

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With business, consumers and exports on the sidelines as drivers of economic growth, that leaves only the public sector. Once again, the government is doing the illogical thing in pursuing austerity, cutting back public services and missing the opportunity of a lifetime to invest in Canada and Canadians.

• (1605)

[Translation]

The Minister of Finance is accusing my party of recommending spending—according to him, that is why the European economies are bordering on ruin—without taking into account the role that private sector financial institutions, which are overenthusiastic, played in the impoverishment of our larger trading partners.

However, although the Minister of Finance must be aware of it, he does not seem to understand the difference between investments and expenditures. The NDP is not talking about expenditures; it is talking about investments in targeted sectors to promote job creation and in infrastructure, including roads, bridges, public transit and high-speed Internet. We are talking about investing to train our workers so that they are productive in the new economy, investing in housing, and investing in our children's education.

[English]

I attended a meeting recently where a former deputy minister of finance called for a division on the government's books to help overcome the failure to distinguish between investments, investments that create assets and lead to significant returns in the economy, productivity, employment, competitiveness and the public purse, the difference between these investments and spending on things like the government's beloved gazebos and fake lakes that are of little economic value.

The fact is that the Toronto Board of Trade emphasizes that a strong infrastructure foundation is a top priority in ensuring economic competitiveness now and in the future.

In fact, the OECD has concluded that Toronto's lack of transportation infrastructure is the leading drag on the region's global competitiveness. Yet, the bill contains no new investments in infrastructure. It is really shocking.

• (1610)

[Translation]

The Conservatives often like to compare the government to a business, as though that were a good thing. However, rare is the business that would cast aside the opportunities available to the government, such as the availability of a qualified workforce, a desperate need for infrastructure across the country, infrastructure that would earn a generous return on investment, and capital available at a rate that is at an almost record low. In similar circumstances, any self-respecting business person would invest extensively, but not this government. The Conservatives do not know how to recognize a good deal.

[English]

What we get are missed opportunities to build a world competitive economy with infrastructure second to none to attract new capital investment and to give our homegrown industries a permanent

advantage over our competitors, and public policies that would only make the recession and the labour market more severe.

The Conservatives call themselves economic managers. It is a cruel joke.

Here is a bill that they claim would address the problems our economy faces. It would fall so far short of what is needed, it is really embarrassing.

Mr. Flaherty admitted yesterday the Conservatives would maintain their do-nothing approach to the economy. The New—

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bruce Stanton):** Order, please. In fact, there are still two minutes remaining for the hon. member. I just remind her that the mention of other hon. members by name is not permitted in the House.

The hon. member for Parkdale—High Park.

**Ms. Peggy Nash:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Let me correct what I said.

The minister admitted yesterday that the Conservatives will maintain their do-nothing approach to the economy. I am happy to repeat that line, but I am sad that is the approach of the government.

The New Democrat motion calling for immediate action on jobs passed unanimously. Even the government recognized the need for action. That is leadership on the economy, what we have proposed.

The minister's continued inaction shows the opposite: a lack of leadership. Sadly, the Conservatives are out of touch with the needs of so many Canadians, a growing number of Canadians who are falling further behind. Canadian families want action on job creation now, decent jobs that will help them pay their bills, not tax cuts, not tax giveaways that a lot of Canadians cannot even get access to.

Sadly, the budget just does not cut it.

We have a better proposal. We are happy to work with the government to really create jobs and investment for all Canadians.

**Mr. Malcolm Allen (Welland, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, let me thank the hon. member for Parkdale—High Park for her impassioned speech and laying out for this House what really needs to get done when it comes time to help those who are really vulnerable in our communities.

I remind this House that Henniges Automotive, which used to be General Tire & Rubber Company, then became GDX, just closed in my riding of Welland on Saturday and threw the last 300 workers out of work. There were over 1,500 workers there at one point, not that long ago. Now they are all gone.

However, one of the things that has happened in our region that is of a positive note is the introduction of inter-regional transit; in other words, municipalities in the Niagara region will now have transit for the first time in a very long time. In fact, we would have to go back to my mother-in-law's day, rest her soul, which was many years ago, when they actually had a train system that went between communities.



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I would ask my hon. colleague what she thinks the government should be doing when it comes to transit in this country, which seems to be always at the tail end of things, whether it be downtown Toronto and now my region of Niagara, where we are finally going to have an inter-regional transit, where people in Port Colborne, which has one of the highest rates of unemployment in the province, who are seeking employment need to get to my good friend the Minister of Justice's Niagara Falls riding to get a job, but who do not have a way to get there because they cannot afford a car now. Finally, they might have regional transit.

I would ask my hon. colleague to comment on what we need to do for transit.

**Ms. Peggy Nash:** Mr. Speaker, in my earlier remarks, I spoke about transit deserts in the city of Toronto, huge regions where mainly people of very modest and increasingly low incomes are living, many of whom are newcomers to Canada.

However, even the rest of our transit system is falling decades behind and there are many smaller communities that have no public transit whatsoever for people to get to and from work. What the government needs to do is invest in our economy and in people by investing in public transit. That is not an expenditure. It is not a spending measure. It is an investment that helps grow our economy and helps Canadians from coast to coast.

● (1615)

[Translation]

**Mr. Pierre Dionne Labelle (Rivière-du-Nord, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to commend the hon. member for the memorable presentation she made about Canada's situation. I know that the other side of the House has the impression that everything is going well. I would like to ask the hon. member a question. Reports by the OECD and the International Monetary Fund say that everything is going well. So, how do we explain the fact that the number of people going to food banks has not stopped increasing since the Conservatives took office? I do not understand.

**Ms. Peggy Nash:** Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the hon. member for his question. It is truly unfortunate to see the increasing number of people who are relying on food banks, particularly children. It is truly terrible. This problem is not one that is unique to big cities; it is a nationwide problem. I have the impression that the government is turning a blind eye to this problem. The Conservatives do not see that most people really do not have enough money to put food on the table and that children, in particular, are going hungry. That is the economic reality of our country. We must take action. We must have an action plan to put people to work.

[English]

**Mrs. Stella Ambler (Mississauga South, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I heard the member opposite talk about jobs for young Canadians. What does she think about the almost 600,000 jobs that have been created in Canada by the efforts of this government and our concentration on economic growth and creating jobs, and the importance we place on that?

Does the member opposite not understand that some of those 600,000 jobs, in fact probably many of them, 80% of which are full-time, are going to young people and that when jobs are created for all

Canadians through economic strength, jobs are created for young people as well?

**Ms. Peggy Nash:** Mr. Speaker, perhaps my colleague opposite did not hear my entire presentation. In my presentation, I challenged the figures that the government has been publicizing because, clearly, those figures do not reflect the real story.

We have a loss of more than 250,000 jobs just to keep up with the proportion of jobs we had in this country before the recession. I am happy to explain further. I did go into it quite clearly in my remarks and I think the testament to it is that the unemployment rate for young Canadians is twice that of the rest of the population. Therefore, clearly, we need to do much more.

**Ms. Linda Duncan (Edmonton—Strathcona, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for her comments about the difference between expenditure and investment. Nowhere is this more important than when we consider the need for investment in aboriginal infrastructure.

I tabled a bill in the House today to get the federal government to have a national strategy and work with other parties, including the provinces, territories and first nations governments, to improve literacy. The OECD and a number of right-wing think tanks have been stating that the declining rate of literacy in this country is a major factor. Statistics show that the highest rate of illiteracy is among aboriginal communities and part of that factor is the lack of decent housing, the lack of safe drinking water and the lack of support to schools. In many cases, they do not even have schools.

I wonder if the member could speak to the matter of the need for investment in our first nations communities to ensure they can participate more fully in our economy.

● (1620)

**Ms. Peggy Nash:** Mr. Speaker, yesterday, we talked about suicide prevention. We heard eloquent speeches about the need for young people to have hope for the future. It is difficult to have hope if people live in extreme poverty, they cannot get proper educations, they do not have running water and they do not see any prospects for a better life. That is what hope is all about. It is up to us to invest in all communities so that young people believe that each and every one of them has a better future.

**Mr. Robert Sopuck (Dauphin—Swan River—Marquette, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, a couple of years ago, I had the honour to work in the oil sands in Alberta and live at an oil sands camp with many workers. I got to know many of them personally. What I learned from my time in the oil sands is what an incredible job creator the oil sands industry is for this entire country, not only providing direct jobs but many indirect jobs right across the country in manufacturing, sales, marketing and so on. The number of jobs and the value to the Canadian economy is almost incalculable. In fact, I would go as far as to say that the oil sands as an industry is almost carrying the entire country.

Given the economic track record of the oil sands, why is the hon. member's party trying to kill the oil sands?

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**Ms. Peggy Nash:** Mr. Speaker, one of the major challenges in the province of Alberta is that the industry now wants to ship out raw bitumen unprocessed across the entire continent and create refining jobs in the Gulf of Mexico. I would ask why the government would want to ship all these jobs out.

Even more important, why would we not invest money, with the same kind of support, funding and investment, in renewable energy, energy that would create a sustainable economy, grow our economy and help us compete with the rest of the world in a low carbon society?

[Translation]

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bruce Stanton):** Before resuming debate, it is my duty, pursuant to Standing Order 38, to inform the House that the question to be raised tonight at the time of adjournment is as follows: the hon. member for Vancouver Quadra, Employment.

Resuming debate. The hon. member for Markham—Unionville.

**Hon. John McCallum (Markham—Unionville, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to split my speech into two parts.

First, there are certain elements of this bill that we do not agree with, but I would also like to say that this budget is no longer adequate, it is no longer sufficient. What was perhaps sufficient 10 months ago is no longer sufficient because of the global economic crisis. As John Maynard Keynes said, "When the facts change, I change my mind. What do you do, sir?" What he said makes sense. When the facts change, a rational response would be to change the action plan. And the facts have changed dramatically, as I will explain in a few minutes.

[English]

On the first aspect of things, there are five elements of the bill that we take some exception to. The first is the same issue that I mentioned in my question to the minister, that is to say that the tax credits are all non-refundable. What that means is that the benefits from these tax credits are specifically not given to lower income Canadians. Therefore, we have a tax credit for art, but if people are low income Canadians they cannot get any money for that.

We have a tax credit for home caregivers. If they have low incomes or they quit their jobs and do not have an income to look after an aging parent, they do not get any money. The same applies to low income volunteer firefighters.

We on this side of the House feel that it is unconscionable to have benefits where that explicitly and deliberately excluded those who need it the most, those with the lowest income, those who are most vulnerable. For that reason alone, the Liberal Party will vote against the bill. There are other things we do not like, but that is so unconscionable and so unacceptable that that alone is sufficient reason to oppose the bill.

The second point has to do with softwood lumber. The budget bill would increase export duties on softwood lumber in both Ontario and in Quebec. It would damage this industry. The government, in negotiating an agreement with the United States, actually gave a billion dollars to our forestry competitors, perhaps thinking that that would solve the problem. However, it did not solve the problem. The

U.S. has come back and has won a legal decision. Therefore, it seems that this is yet another example of the Conservatives making Canadian forestry producers pay for their mismanagement of the softwood lumber file.

The third point is the hiring credit for small businesses. The government has grossly exaggerated the importance of this. First, it gives with one hand and takes back with another. The thousand dollars is taxable. It never told us that. Also, the size of the business has to be so small that 600,000 small businesses will not qualify. This is a trivial little thing. It is not a bad thing, it is just tiny, and it is dwarfed by the increase of 5.6% in employment insurance premiums, which the government will be imposing as of January 1 of next year.

A fourth point, and the second to last one, is the gas tax transfer. As was previously stated, it would have been made permanent at \$2 billion but it is not indexed. I spoke with many mayors on this subject and if it is not indexed, with population growth and inflation, the real value of the money will go down steadily over time. I think it would have been much better if the government had indexed the fund to inflation or to GDP growth, or something of that nature.

Finally, there is the phasing out of the voting subsidies. We do acknowledge that the Conservatives ran the election with this as a part of their platform and they won, so we are not making a fight about them introducing it. However, I do think it is important to remember the history of this. The former prime minister, Jean Chrétien, removed the ability of large corporations to give money and, in return, he instituted this public subsidy. This is a system that I think is practised in much of the western world, so I do not think there is anything wrong with it. All I would suggest is that, in light of the removal of the subsidy, the government might give some consideration to increasing the maximum amount that individuals are allowed to contribute.

Those are five reasons.

● (1625)

[Translation]

Those are five reasons why we take some exception to this bill. But there is also the fact that the world has changed.

[English]

I ask members to think back 10 months to when this budget was presented. What was the state of the Canadian and the world economy? The stock market was going up nicely. It has now slumped to a bear market. Nobody was thinking about a European banking crisis. Nobody was thinking about Greece defaulting on its debt. Things seemed to be going quite fine in Europe.

Now we have this huge crisis in Europe, a crisis involving the risk of default in a number of countries as well as risk to major European banks.



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The U.S. was recovering nicely, as I recall, 10 months ago, and now the U.S. economy has clearly stalled. Now we have seen the dysfunctional politics in the U.S. Congress over the debt ceiling issue. We may have a half-decent plan from President Obama, but the chances of the politicians south of the border agreeing to do anything seem remote. Our Canadian economy actually had negative growth in the second quarter, and, with all of these events around the world, it is at risk of stalling as well.

For these reasons, it makes eminently good sense to change policy when the circumstances change. That is what Keynes said, as I quoted earlier.

Let me quote from three people or institutions that are normally fiscally conservative but that agree with what I just said.

First of all, let us hear the new head of the IMF. Her central proposal to countries was to focus on balancing the books and reducing debt in the medium run, but in the short run to take measures to support jobs and the economy. That is the IMF talking—the IMF, which traditionally has a slash-and-burn attitude to countries in fiscal difficulties.

The second example is from Sherry Cooper, chief economist of the Bank of Montreal. Chief economists are normally fairly fiscally conservative. She blasted the government for taking action to cut the economy at a time of global crisis and economic weakness. She likened the government to Herbert Hoover, who in the 1930s made the Depression even more depressed by taking fiscally austere measures.

The third example is *The Economist* magazine, a bastion of the free market and fiscal prudence. It said something similar to the IMF, that countries should take actions in the short term to support the economy and jobs while dealing with the balanced budget with a credible medium-term plan.

● (1630)

[Translation]

These three—the IMF, the chief economist of the Bank of Montreal and *The Economist*—are normally fiscally conservative. But they all agree that now is not the right time for budget cuts and increases in employment insurance premiums. I think this government should be listening.

[English]

What I am saying is that now is not the time to go forward with these increases in employment insurance that the government is proposing to take. A 5.6% increase in employment insurance is not an appropriate policy at a time like this. These are job-killing tax hikes. Yes, at some moment in the future we may have to increase employment insurance premiums, but now is not the time.

Similarly, the government is proposing \$4 billion of cuts through its strategic review.

We are not opposed in principle to finding savings in government. We did that. I was the chair of something we called the expenditure review committee in 2005. We found \$11 billion of savings in government, but those were good economic times. We did not find

savings of \$11 billion at a time when the economy was very weak and at a time when the world was in economic crisis.

Timing is everything. I am saying that now is not the time to increase employment insurance premiums. Now is not the time to proceed with this \$4 billion per year of cuts.

I might say, while on the subject of the strategic review and the cuts, that I think the government is making a fundamental mistake because it is not applying what I would call a regional lens. Canada has one of the most centralized bureaucracies in the western world, with a huge concentration in the national capital region. I know from experience that cuts of jobs in the regions are sometimes even more damaging, both in terms of the jobs and in terms of the services provided, than cuts in the national capital region.

I know as well that if the system here in Ottawa has to do cuts, it prefers to cut in the regions and not in Ottawa. I will give one example. I was recently in Prince Edward Island, which was about to lose 60 jobs in an employment insurance processing operation run by Services Canada. This was devastating not only to the small community, which would lose 60 jobs, but also to those applying for employment insurance, because no longer would they have real people nearby to whom they could speak. They would have to call some 1-800 number, and I was told many would have to wait for literally hours on the phone before anyone answered.

It is okay to do expenditure review to improve the efficiency of government. It is a good thing to do, but only under certain conditions.

First, we do not do it when the economy is super weak and already at risk of going into recession, as is the case today.

Second, when we do it, we do it sensitively. We apply a regional lens and we do not make cuts that hurt the most vulnerable in our society, which is what the Conservatives have tended to do.

● (1635)

[Translation]

To conclude, there are a number of reasons why we take exception to this bill. The Liberals will be voting against it.

The world has changed dramatically since the budget was introduced, and what was appropriate six months ago is no longer appropriate because of the economic crisis.

[English]

**Mr. Ed Komarnicki (Souris—Moose Mountain, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I wonder how the member will explain to those who would actually benefit from this budget implementation bill that he will vote against it, more particularly when he says that he does not like the fact that the EI premiums are limited.

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We froze the EI premiums during the difficult economic times, but his party's way is different. His party voted for and asked for a 45-day work year that would have added billions of dollars of costs to the EI program, increasing the premiums. As well, when the Liberal Party was in government, it took \$50 billion, give or take, from the EI fund.

Would the member answer this: if the Liberals had not taken those moneys from the EI fund, is it not true that there would never have been any need for an increase in EI premiums?

**Hon. John McCallum:** Mr. Speaker, I am not sure the hon. member was listening to my speech and I am not sure he knows much about EI premiums, because I do not think his statements make much sense.

The problem is with the government's policy on EI. I agree that in the long run we must balance the EI books. However, the Conservatives' system of balancing it very quickly, over two or three years, carries the consequence that they will be raising EI premiums during a recession, which is absolutely the wrong thing to do.

The Conservatives held off for a year or two by freezing premiums, by overriding their system, but now they are going sharply up in EI premiums just when the Canadian economy is at greatest risk.

I have spoken to many experts on the EI system. All of them, the actuaries and all the others, agreed that it makes no sense to rebalance the EI books so quickly, because it means that premiums would be raised just at the time when Canadian workers and the Canadian economy are at their most vulnerable.

**Ms. Peggy Nash (Parkdale—High Park, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, the member spoke about EI premiums and how sharply the government is raising the premiums. The other side of this is that fewer than 40% of unemployed Canadians can actually get access to the EI benefits that these premiums pay for.

Given that the International Monetary Fund reminds us that growth is going down and unemployment is going up, does the member not think that it is time to revisit the level of benefits and access to benefits for all Canadians so that we can restore EI a point of actually providing insurance for Canadians who lose their jobs through no fault of their own?

**Hon. John McCallum:** Mr. Speaker, I thank my hon. colleague for her point. However, those are two separate subjects.

I stand by what I said: now is not the time to raise employment insurance premiums. I suspect she would agree with me on that issue, but I will not put words in her mouth.

I also agree that there is an element of unfairness with regard to those who receive benefits and those who do not. Coming from Ontario, I recall statistics showing that it was particularly difficult for Ontarians to qualify, so I do think there is potential for reform in the area that she describes.

• (1640)

[Translation]

**Hon. Stéphane Dion (Saint-Laurent—Cartierville, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, my hon. colleague and I are fortunate enough to have a

former minister who has already reviewed a budget in order to create some room to stimulate the economy without creating an even bigger deficit. This government has spent more than any previous government. Even before the recession, it plunged us into a deficit and eliminated the surplus that had been accumulated.

Could my colleague tell us how we would be able to avoid increasing payroll taxes—which certainly should not be done during a recession—and avoid increasing the deficit too much, while carefully managing public finances?

**Hon. John McCallum:** Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his question. There are certain things that the government could do, but it will probably not do them. For example, it could restore corporate taxes to their previous levels, call for tenders for the fighter jets or refrain from building so many prisons. That way, we could finance some things, but it is not likely that the government will do things that way.

Since a slowdown is inevitable and it is not likely that the Minister of Finance will meet his deficit objectives, if we were to return to a balanced budget a few years later than expected, it would be acceptable in light of economic situation. I think that is what the head of the IMF said.

**Mr. Pierre Nantel (Longueuil—Pierre-Boucher, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I wonder if my hon. colleague, who was once a minister of revenue, has any tips or tricks he could share with the current government regarding the speed of adjustment to the new reality. When the facts change, how quickly can one change course?

**Hon. John McCallum:** Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member for his question. The speed at which we should change our course depends on the speed of the changes in the world. The world has changed dramatically. As I already said in my speech, some 10 months ago, everything was fine and people were not nervous; they had confidence. Now the opposite is true. For that reason, I think the government needs to change its course rather significantly and quickly.

**Mr. Pierre Dionne Labelle (Rivière-du-Nord, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, does the hon. member believe that the purchase of fighter jets without a competitive bidding process constitutes standard practice? Would the member describe it as something that is likely to reassure Canadians regarding this government's management abilities?

**Hon. John McCallum:** Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member for the question.

As a former defence minister, I know without a doubt that we need those jets. The question is not whether or not we should purchase these jets, because we need them to defend Canada, to defend our territory. Rather, the question is whether there should have been a competitive bidding process. I am very much in favour of a bidding process.

The government is not being honest when it ignores the fact that the cost of these jets has doubled and that a competitive bidding process would have saved it at least a few billion dollars. That is what the government should do.



● (1645)

[English]

**Mr. Ed Komarnicki (Souris—Moose Mountain, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I will be sharing my time with the member for Crowfoot.

I am pleased to speak to this bill regarding keeping Canada's economy and jobs growing, which is the next phase of Canada's economic action plan. It is a plan that will support Canada's economic recovery and promote job creation. It is a plan that will support communities and invest in education and training. It is a plan that will help Canadian families and respect their hard-earned tax dollars.

This bill is a low-tax plan for jobs and economic growth. It is a continuation of the prudent fiscal policy that has been at the foundation of our Conservative government's economic agenda. Our government is focused on what matters to Canadians: creating jobs and promoting economic growth.

While many governments in the developed world are dealing with turbulent financial problems and unsustainable debt crises, as was mentioned earlier today, Canada has become a leader on the international economic stage. We have the strongest job creation record in the G7. Nearly 600,000 net new jobs have been created since July 2009. We have a renewed AAA credit rating by Moody's. We will have, according to the International Monetary Fund, the strongest economic growth in the G7 over the next two years. *Forbes*, the influential business magazine, has ranked Canada as the best country in the world to do business.

These fundamentals will help us to create jobs and grow the economy as many Canadians want and would expect from us.

While this is indeed positive news for Canadian businesses and the Canadian economy, we must remain cognizant of the fragile economic situation in Europe and the United States. The Canadian economy is mutually connected with the economies of the world. We are not isolated from the potential economic problems that remain outside our borders. That is why we must stay the course and implement the next phase of Canada's economic action plan so that we can continue the positive economic growth and job-creating agenda our government has spearheaded thus far. This new piece of legislation will promote Canadian job creation and economic growth.

With the introduction of the temporary hiring credit for small businesses, we are providing this one-time credit of up to \$1,000 to encourage small businesses to expand their workforces and hire new skilled employees. All of the steps we have taken are to that end to ensure the economy continues to grow and ensure that the jobs are out there. This hiring credit is precisely what small businesses have been calling for and our Conservative government is delivering results. It will encourage small businesses to hire more workers, which will translate into employment insurance savings by lessening the burden on the EI system.

The Canadian Federation of Independent Business has declared this initiative as particularly important and went further to say that it will make it easier for small businesses to create jobs. Indeed, small businesses are the engine of job creation in this country. The

### *Government Orders*

Canadian Federation of Agriculture cheered it as well by saying that it welcomes the news for farm operations that are looking to expand.

Our Conservative government is also supporting the Canadian manufacturing sector. We are extending the accelerated capital cost allowance for two years so that companies can write off investment in manufacturing and processing machinery and equipment. This will allow them to grow their businesses and procure top-of-the-line equipment that will bring them to the forefront of international technological innovation. They will do this at a time when it is needed most.

This legislation is also doing more to support local communities. We are legislating a permanent annual investment of \$2 billion in the gas tax fund in order to provide predictable long-term infrastructure funding for municipalities. This is something municipalities have been calling for year after year. They want to know they have this source of funding to do the many projects that are necessary to provide the infrastructure for continued economic growth. We are ensuring that cities and towns support and invest in infrastructure priorities that are important to them.

Our Conservative government supports local input and local decision making. Making this investment permanent and annual will benefit towns and communities in my riding and, indeed, in the many ridings from coast to coast to coast.

Our Conservative government is also enhancing the wage earner protection program so that workers are covered and protected from employer bankruptcy and receivership. This is a program that has been very well received and utilized.

● (1650)

This legislation will also help families by way of the new family caregiver tax credit in the amount of \$2,000 for caregivers of loved ones with infirmities, including for the first time, spouses, common-law partners and minor children.

We all know many people who are faced with the daily struggle of taking care of ill parents, spouses or children and need some additional help. These individuals also have to go to work. They have to pay their bills and send their children to college or university. Through the family caregiver tax credit, our Conservative government is committed to assisting and supporting these caring individuals who have sacrificed incredibly for the benefit of their family.

The Canadian Cancer Society has called this new tax credit:

...a good start in providing more support for all family caregivers.

We welcome the tax credit and other measures in the budget as a step in the right direction.

Our Conservative government also recognizes the economic benefits that come with investing in education and training. We are supporting universities, colleges, skills trades and apprenticeship programs.

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The legislation forgives student loans for new doctors and nurses in underserved rural and remote areas. A portion of the federal component of their Canada student loans, \$40,000 for doctors and \$20,000 for nurses, will be forgiven so that these doctors and nurses can practise and support the rural communities of our country that need them the most.

It will not only assist students who are riddled with student debt, but it will ensure that rural and remote communities, communities that form a large part of my riding, get the adequate medical services they deserve and require. This measure has been very well received in my home province of Saskatchewan. Our premier has publicly applauded it by saying:

Doctors in rural Saskatchewan is a huge issue and one that we're dealing with in terms of training seats and expanding the number of countries from where we can attract foreign trained doctors and the physician recruitment agency. But help from the feds is a welcome thing.

This legislation also includes a tax credit for volunteer firefighters. That is why I have some difficulty with those who say they are not going to support the budget, because we are giving benefits to certain segments of society that require the help. How do those members say to those people that they are not going to support them with the benefits that they need at this time?

The credit for volunteer firefighters plays a critical role in their serving of their communities. They put themselves at risk for the safety of their neighbours and the protection of their communities. The least we could do is address their concern.

This legislation recognizes the importance of this life-saving work by establishing a new volunteer firefighters tax credit. This will be a 15% non-refundable tax credit on an amount of \$3,000 for volunteer firefighters. This has been enthusiastically received. In the words of the Canadian Association of Fire Chiefs:

We were delighted with its proposal....This measure will help with the recruitment and retention of volunteer firefighters across the country, which will in turn help protect Canadians and our communities.

This is precisely the kind of thing we should be doing.

The keeping Canada's economy and jobs growing bill helps support Canada's economic recovery. We must be prudent in the way that we approach and manage the Canadian economy so that we can continue on the path of positive growth while at the same time remaining cautiously aware of the potential economic troubles in other countries of the world.

Our Conservative government, through the economic action plan, has maintained steady control of the Canadian economy. Our plan is working and we must continue to stay the course and meet the needs of Canadians as they require from us as a responsible government.

[Translation]

**Ms. Ève Pélet (La Pointe-de-l'Île, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, earlier, one of the hon. member's colleagues asked our finance critic a question. He said that the oil sands were creating a lot of jobs and that, in fact, the oil sands were stimulating the entire Canadian economy.

I would like him to comment on a situation created by this government—the situation where all of our crude oil is sent to the United States. As a result, thousands of Quebecers and Canadians

have lost their jobs. This is particularly true in my riding where thousands of people lost their jobs because of the closure of two refineries in the past few years. I would therefore like him to comment on this issue.

• (1655)

[English]

**Mr. Ed Komarnicki:** Mr. Speaker, creating the conditions for people to invest is always important. We have lower taxes right across the board to make our country one of the best places for investment to take place.

Deloitte Canada had this to say:

...budget [2012] further cultivates Canada's position as an attractive business destination for global enterprise. By choosing to proceed with planned corporate tax rate reductions, the government sends a signal that Canada is friendly to investment — both foreign and domestic.

In terms of what is happening in the oil sands, the jobs that are created there are jobs for everyone right across the country. For every job that is provided, material needs to be supplied, contractors are required and goods and services need to be done. That is what propels the economy. That is what generates the kind of activity that we need across the country. We must not get in the way of it. We must support it.

**Ms. Irene Mathysen (London—Fanshawe, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I noted that my colleague made reference to the temporary hiring credit for small business. I wonder why it is not a permanent hiring credit because, after all, small and medium businesses are the engine of the economy. They do create jobs, whereas the big banks and the big oil companies that have had permanent tax breaks have not created the kind of jobs that the government suggests. Why not make it permanent?

**Mr. Ed Komarnicki:** Mr. Speaker, this credit helps those who are affected by the current situation and we will deal with the situation as it goes forward into the future.

We not only did that but we also froze EI premiums when the economy required that. If members of the New Democratic Party had their way, they would have increased the EI account by probably \$4 billion or more dollars by some of the things they wanted to put in, like the 45 day work year.

The Liberal Party at one point took up to \$50 billion out of the EI account, which cleaned out the balance. We said that would not happen again, which is why we have decided that benefits must equal the premiums. That is the principle that we have in place. It is a good principle and we will continue with that.

Where there is a need, we will take action to ensure that employers and employees are not overly burdened.

**Mr. Bob Zimmer (Prince George—Peace River, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I heard the NDP talking about shipping raw bitumen to our southern neighbours. Does the NDP support increasing our refining capacity in Canada?

I would like to ask the hon. member just how many jobs we have actually created through the economic action plan.



**Mr. Ed Komarnicki:** Mr. Speaker, despite what was happening in other parts of the world and despite what was happening south of the border, we were able, through our economic action plan and the steps we took, to recoup the jobs that were lost because of the economic uncertainty. In fact, over 600,000 net new jobs have been created since 2009 and many of them are full-time, meaningful jobs.

We invested billions of dollars with respect to skills upgrading and training during that difficult time so people were well positioned, not only to return to jobs but to return to better jobs to ensure they could earn a decent wage and support their families.

**Mr. Kevin Sorenson (Crowfoot, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, it is a real honour to again stand in this House and speak on behalf of the constituents of Crowfoot to Bill C-13, Keeping Canada's Economy and Jobs Growing Act.

The legislation that we are debating today introduces our Minister of Finance's key elements of the next phase of Canada's economic plan, a low-tax plan for jobs and growth.

My constituents of Crowfoot know that our Conservative government is focused on creating jobs and promoting economic growth. Under the leadership of our Prime Minister, Canada has the strongest economy and the strongest job growth record in the G7. We have created nearly 600,000 net new jobs since July 2009.

The International Monetary Fund, IMF, projects that Canada will continue to be among the nations with the strongest economy and the strongest economic growth in the G7 over the next two years.

However, Canada is not immune to the global economic turbulence. Bill C-13 provides our government with the means to stay the course and implement the next phase of Canada's economic action plan.

One of the features of Bill C-13 is a temporary hiring tax credit for small business. It would make it easier for small businesses to hire workers or enhance wages. This is precisely the kind of measure that Canadian workers need at this time. This would create new jobs and help save the jobs presently had by the workers across this country.

Hard-working, tax-paying Canadians raising their families need stable and predictable employment to see them through this difficult economic time. The keeping Canada's economy and jobs growing act would help support Canada's economic recovery.

I just want to touch on a couple of highlights of Bill C-13.

First, it would expand tax support for clean energy generation to encourage green investments. According to what opposition members have said today, they will vote against that, the opportunity to enhance green investments and clean energy generation.

Second, the bill would extend the mineral exploration tax credit for flow-through share investors by one year to support Canada's mining sector.

I had the privilege in the past Parliament to chair the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Development. At that committee, we studied a number of bills, such as Bill C-300 and others. I know that the Canadian mining sector contributes over \$300 billion to Canada's GDP each year and over 300,000 Canadians are employed in the mining industry.

### *Government Orders*

The mining industry stimulates and supports economic growth, both in large urban centres and in remote rural communities, including numerous first nation communities across the country. However, again, the opposition members say that they will not support that.

Mining accounts for 19% of Canadian goods exports and \$5.5 billion in taxes and royalties paid to the federal, provincial and territorial governments. The industry also generates considerable economic spin-off activity. There are more than 3,200 companies that provide the industry with services ranging from engineering consulting to drilling equipment. In addition, over half of the freight revenues of Canada's railroads are generated by mining.

Many Canadians are not aware of the large role that Canada's mining sector plays in our economy. However, it is important to nurture Canada's mining industry.

Bill C-13 also would simplify custom tariffs in order to facilitate trade and lower the administrative burden for all businesses.

Most Canadians do not know that Canada is a nation built by trade. We do more than \$1 billion a day in trade flowing over the Canada-U.S. border. While many Canadians understand the important role of trade, they do not realize that trade just with the Americans amounts to \$1.8 billion a day.

Since 2006, our Conservative government has been working diligently to boost Canada's access to markets, not just across the border with the neighbours closest to us, but all around the world, and we are having success.

● (1700)

I look in the House today and I see our agriculture minister who has been working hard at his desk here all afternoon. I commend him and our trade minister for the amount of work they have done around the world to open new markets and give, whether it is our agriculture sector or our manufacturing sector, the opportunity to market their goods in many of those countries. Yes, we are having success.

The agriculture producers, the farmers, who I represent work hard every day to take advantage of the opportunities that the Minister of Agriculture and the government are providing. We could feed the world from where I come from in Alberta and from the west, so we welcome all customers, and that includes the new customers. The more the merrier. We pledge to fill all the orders that our Minister of Agriculture and our Minister of International Trade can find for our agricultural sector.

*Government Orders*

The bill would extend the accelerated capital cost allowance treatment for investments in manufacturing and processing machinery and equipment for two years to support the manufacturing and processing sector. Bill C-13 would extend this well received measure from one of our previous budgets. Our Minister of Finance has been fighting the effects in Canada of the global economic recession since 2009. Canada's manufacturing and processing base has been using this measure to create and save jobs. They still want this accelerated capital cost allowance and our Conservative government is glad to give it and to be in a position where we can allow it to continue.

We are eliminating the mandatory retirement age for federally regulated employees in order to give older workers the option of staying in the workplace. We know that Canadians are healthier and they are living longer than ever before in our history. In economically difficult times, older workers sometimes want to choose to stay working for another year or two and make some extra money for their families or for themselves in their retirement. This contributes to economic growth. Older workers have a great deal to contribute and our government is giving them the go-ahead. However, it sounds like the opposition will be voting against it.

There is a very important initiative in Bill C-13 for the constituents in my riding. The government would provide a permanent annual investment of \$2 billion in the gas tax fund to provide predictable, long term infrastructure funding for municipalities. Unlike the Liberal governments of the past, our government has returned gas tax revenues to jurisdictions where they were raised. We deliver these revenues to local jurisdictions earlier in the year than ever before so they can plan for the building in the summer season. This allows local governments to free up other funds in their budgets and get more accomplished through the calendar year.

In my riding of Crowfoot, we have many small county municipal governments and they rely on these funds. When I attend those council meetings, they let us know how much those funds are needed and appreciated. In some cases, the amounts of revenues in small villages or communities seem small but it makes projects possible and it allows small communities to grow when it spurs on local employment.

There are a number of other initiatives in Bill C-13 for creating and saving jobs and helping Canada's economy. Over the course of the debate on this bill, other speakers from this side of the House will detail some of these initiatives.

Bill C-13, as already mentioned by the member for Souris—Moose Mountain, introduces the volunteer firefighters tax credit for volunteer firefighters: When the opposition talks about tax credits for those who do not need it, well we are talking about the volunteer firefighters of my constituency.

The bill would increase the ability of Canadians to give more with confidence to legitimate charities by introducing a package of integrity measures designed to help combat fraud and other forms of abuse. I know that the people in my riding are very charity minded. My constituents are generous and engaged in many charitable projects. They appreciate this initiative to ensure their efforts are not in vain.

Bill C-13 has help for families. It introduces the new family caregiver tax credit to assist caregivers of all types to help with dependent relatives.

This is a good bill. I appreciate the number of opposition members who have been here to listen to the debate today.

• (1705)

When we are in opposition, it is not always about opposing. It is about standing up and supporting families in tough times in the economy. We would appreciate members' support.

[Translation]

**Mrs. Sadia Groguhé (Saint-Lambert, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the hon. member for his remarks.

In my riding, families are becoming increasingly poor. They are making use of food banks on a regular basis. This is a phenomenon that is becoming more common everywhere in Canada. While the Conservatives are saying we have the strongest economy, I believe that we have an economy that is creating more and more difficulty for families.

Could the hon. member explain why, despite tax reductions, more and more families are struggling? Also, what does this bill do to end unemployment among young people?

• (1710)

[English]

**Mr. Kevin Sorenson:** Mr. Speaker, I want to thank this new member for her question. I have watched her across the way today. She has tried to stand on a number of occasions and I am glad she had her opportunity today.

One of the things that our government is committed to doing in the new part of this budget implementation, Bill C-13, is to get rid of the taxpayers' funding of political parties, the millions of dollars that go to the NDP, the Liberal Party, the Bloc, and to all parties. We are saying it is time that political parties raise their own funds to free up all these millions of dollars to invest in families and put back into cutting taxes and creating jobs.

The member talks about many of the families in her riding who are without and do not have a job. It allows us the opportunity to create jobs for these families and to ensure there is a breadwinner in those homes and in those families.

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the member was talking about the benefits of trade with the United States. Over \$1 billion a day is cited. We have President Obama and many other American politicians now promoting and saying "buy American". At the same time we have a Canadian Prime Minister, though many would suggest a "governor" might be more appropriate, who says not to worry about buy American, we will go ahead with the perimeter security deal and it is no problem as we will affix our signature and allow that to go forward.



Given the member's speech and how he has recognized the importance of trade between our two countries and what is happening with the buy American, why would his Prime Minister not hold fast in terms of signing off on the perimeter security, so we can protect our economy and those hundreds, if not thousands, of jobs that are dependent on that trade that he talked about so much in his speech?

**Mr. Kevin Sorenson:** Mr. Speaker, to the contrary, the Prime Minister has been very clear and our Minister of Finance, who was elected the greatest finance minister in the world, basically, have said just the opposite. They have said that now is not the time. An economic global downturn is not the time to begin protectionist efforts. I think that message has been given to the Americans. It has been given to every country around the world. It is the time for us to enhance trade. It is not the time to circle around and look inward and say we are only going to deal within.

In fact, even as we speak, the chair of the international trade committee and the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of International Trade are in the United States sitting down with Congress, sitting down with key players and spreading the exact message that this member from Winnipeg talks about. I agree.

I will tell members what we will not do. We are not going to get caught up in the same thing and say we are going to negotiate this and until they do we are going to cut them off here, cut them off there, no more cattle going back and forth, no more energy going. We are not going to tie our trade. We are going to enhance our trade because that is where the answer to getting out of this economy is, especially for Canada, that is so dependent on exports.

• (1715)

[Translation]

**Mr. Thomas Mulcair (Outremont, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to speak to Bill C-13, An Act to implement certain provisions of the 2011 budget.

[English]

It is always interesting in a context to hear what the governing Conservatives have to say. The member who just spoke was quite interesting at the end. He said, "This is how we are going to get out of this economy". I think he is quite right. We once had a balanced economy in Canada and the Conservatives have been taking us out of that balanced economy.

I believe what he was trying to say is that this is how we will get ourselves out of these economic problems. But in fact, what the Conservatives are doing with the Americans is a continuation of a series of mistakes that they have made in international trade over the years.

The North American Free Trade Agreement was supposed to set a certain standard for reciprocity. Instead, when the Americans came to rough times, they established for themselves buy America programs, which is a flagrant violation of the North American Free Trade Agreement. However, the governing Conservatives have turned out to be a bunch of pushovers. They do not even stand up for what has already been signed that would have been in Canada's interests.

### *Government Orders*

Last week, we had another example, with the Keystone pipeline. Instead of providing that we would apply the normal rules of sustainable developments, such as internalization of costs and polluter pay, they are going to export jobs without adding any value here. It hearkens back to a day when we used to export raw logs to the United States and then import furniture. That is the same kind of economy that they want us to have today. That is their lack of vision.

Governing is about vision. Governing is about establishing choices. We have heard them have a series of consultations over the past three years about pensions. We often hear them say that it is not fair that people in trade unions should have good pensions. It is what we call in French "le nivellement vers le bas", we are going to bring everything down to the lowest common denominator instead of bringing everyone up.

A country as rich as Canada should not let people who have worked all their lives arrive at retirement age without a proper pension. Instead of removing the pensions, as they are now doing and fighting case by case to remove pensions as collective agreements come up for negotiation, we should, together, be fighting for a fair deal for all Canadians and a proper decent pension, because that is also part of sustainable development. Otherwise, the young generation of today is going to be stuck with that bill also.

The Conservatives, by their choices, are now leaving the largest environmental, economic and social debt in our history, and they are leaving it in the backpacks of the young people who are in university now and telling them that they do not have a choice, that they cannot do anything about it, and that is the only way things are going to be.

They have provided tens of billions of dollars in tax reductions to Canada's richest corporations, in particular, the chartered banks and the oil companies, and they have so little to show for it. They have this little piecemeal approach: they are going to announce this thing here and this thing there. Overall, their approach to the economy has been damaging.

What they have done, and it has been documented well by Statistics Canada, is the same mistake that has been done in other countries over the years. In Holland, in the 1960s, when large sources of gas were found off the coast, it was quite pleased. The Dutch said, "This is going to bring in a lot of money from other countries". They were never so right. However, at the same time, the guilder went through the roof and their exports dropped because other countries could not afford to buy their products.

That is the same thing that we are doing now. We are bringing in an artificially high number of U.S. dollars into Canada. Why artificially high? Simply because we have never internalized the environmental costs; a basic principle of sustainable development.

By doing that, we have brought the Canadian dollar to heights that it has not seen in decades, and that has killed off our manufacturing sector. Just in Ontario, over 250,000 good paying manufacturing jobs have been killed by the choices of the Conservatives. In Canada, the total number is closer to 500,000 manufacturing jobs lost.

*Government Orders*

That is why we say that they have destabilized the balanced economy that Canada had built up since the second world war, with the different sectors: the primary sector, with our forests and our mines, the manufacturing and processing secondary sector, and of course an important service sector.

However, as those good paying manufacturing jobs are being killed off, not only are we leaving, because of the errors of the Conservatives, the biggest debt in our history, in terms of the ecology and the environment, we are also leaving year by year, now, the largest economic debt.

Mr. Speaker, I am going to be splitting my time with my friend and colleague, the member for London—Fanshawe.

That is the essential error that the Conservatives have committed since they came to power six years ago. They have had nothing but concern for how quickly they could exploit the tar sands.

• (1720)

Let us not make the mistake of throwing out the baby with the bathwater. No one who realizes the importance of that industry in our economy would say we should ever shut it down outright. People who are calling for that are not thinking any further than the end of their noses. We cannot say we will stop an industry that represents such an important part of our GDP.

What we can do is apply basic principles of sustainable development to that industry. It would have a salutary effect on what we just described, in other words, this artificially high Canadian dollar because of the large number of U.S. greenbacks that we have taken in. That is artificially high, as I say, because we have not included the real costs. We are leaving the costs for cleaning up the soil, the water and the air to future generations. That is the environmental debt, and the tar sands is but one example.

When we realize that Keystone is but one of several pipelines that have been rapidly approved by the Conservatives, others would be the Alberta Clipper, Southern Lights, there are several that have been approved, each of those pipelines is exporting at the same time tens of thousands of jobs. We are in such a rush to get the raw bitumen into the pipeline that we do not even realize that all the processing, manufacturing and transformation will take place south of the border. They will be making more money and getting more jobs from our raw resources than we are ourselves.

That is a fundamental economic error that the current government is making and one that shows where its priorities are. The concrete result of that is a little bill like Bill C-13, where we have a sprinkling here and a sprinkling there. It is trying to show that there is some activity.

The real world is that an existing infrastructure, a federal obligation, a federal infrastructure like the Champlain Bridge in Montreal, we learned today, will now be a toll bridge. This is the same bridge that is used in an agglomeration of over four million people. It is not just important as part of the lifeblood of the island of Montreal and the greater Montreal area, it is extremely important for all of eastern Canada. When trucks come through from Toronto or points west going to the Maritimes, they all go through Montreal, through the island and over the Champlain Bridge. That infrastructure is a crucial economic infrastructure for all of Canada.

We found out today that because the Conservatives have given away tens of billions of dollars of taxpayers' money to the banks and the oil companies, hard-strapped families who have trouble making ends meet, who have trouble getting to the end of the month with what they have, will now have a new bill, a bill that will be slapped on them by the Conservatives because there is no money left. They will have to pay for something that was a public infrastructure that will become a private property. It will become for profit and the public will again be stuck with the bill. Again, the result of choices by the Conservatives.

[Translation]

This is a clear illustration of the errors committed by the Conservatives. They have been committing the same error for six years. The failure to apply basic principles of sustainable development has caused us to import an artificially high number of U.S. dollars. As a result, the value of the Canadian dollar has increased and it is more difficult for our manufacturing companies to export because our exports have become too expensive.

We are in the process of committing a well-documented error made in the Netherlands in the 1960s, when they discovered large gas deposits. The term "Dutch disease" is used to describe what happened.

The Conservatives preferred—it was their choice, their priority—to give tens of billions of dollars in tax cuts to corporations and the clear result of that is that families who are already unable to make ends meet are being taxed again in the form of a royalty that would be paid to the private partners who are going to build the new Champlain Bridge, when that infrastructure, which is vital to the economy in eastern Canada, is currently being used free of charge by the people who live on Montreal's south shore.

That is the Conservative approach at work. The Conservatives can stand up and pat themselves on the back and claim that their Minister of Finance—just listen to what the Conservative member who spoke before me said—was voted the greatest minister. Get real. That does not exist.

We believe that the Conservatives have made serious mistakes in the choices they have made and their choices are having an adverse effect on the Canadian economy.

**Ms. Charmaine Borg (Terrebonne—Blainville, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his speech and for talking a little about university students.

I will attempt to explain for my colleagues the reality faced by my generation. We are told that we are lucky to be working. We come out of university with debt and we are told that, not only are we lucky to have a job, but that we are lucky to have a full-time job because they are becoming harder to find. Full-time, permanent jobs, with a pension and benefits, are disappearing and youth unemployment is rising. I would like my colleague to comment on that.



• (1725)

**Mr. Thomas Mulcair:** Mr. Speaker, my colleague has raised a very important point. In fact, these 500 well-paid jobs that allow a family to make a living and that come with a pension are disappearing. They are being replaced by precarious, lower-paying jobs that are often part-time, especially in the service sector. That is the reality.

Although we respect the people in these jobs, the pay is not enough to raise a family and there is often no pension. For that reason we are saying that another social debt is being added to the burden of today's students. Sustainable development takes into account environmental, economic and social aspects, which contribute to the social debt being left to future generations. That is a mistake.

**Ms. Ève Péclet (La Pointe-de-l'Île, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to hear what my colleague has to say. The Conservative member who spoke before him talked about investments in green energy with respect to the oil sands. I would like the member for Outremont to talk to the House about the government's new policy on the Keystone project and on its new policy for the mass export of our oil to the United States. With this policy, we will not be able to profit from our own natural resources because we will be required to buy back the refined oil from the United States, which means that it is impossible for us to invest in green energies. Furthermore, this policy for the mass export of our oil will lead to the loss of thousands of jobs for Canadians and Quebecers in my riding and elsewhere.

**Mr. Thomas Mulcair:** Mr. Speaker, the member for La Pointe-de-l'Île raises a point she is very familiar with. The closure of the Shell refinery in Montreal has contributed to this massive loss of jobs. Regarding the Keystone project, the Conservatives are telling us that we do not need to do the refining here because we do not have the refining capacity, so we will send it to the United States, along with all of the associated jobs. That is utter nonsense.

In fact, we did have a refining capacity. Today they are saying that they want to invest in green energies, but where is their plan to protect the jobs at the Shell refinery in La Pointe-de-l'Île? They do not have one. They have no vision for clean and renewable energies, no vision for job creation, and certainly no vision for Canada's future energy security. Shame on the Conservatives.

[English]

**Mr. Bob Zimmer (Prince George—Peace River, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I would ask the hon. member to clarify the NDP position on refining capacity in Canada. Is the NDP policy to increase refining capacity in Canada? If that is the case, I would like to know.

**Mr. Thomas Mulcair:** Mr. Speaker, the astonishing thing with the Conservatives is that they fail to realize what we have. The member for La Pointe-de-l'Île went through the shutdown of one of Canada's most productive refineries, the Shell refinery in eastern Montreal.

The argument the Conservatives put forward is that there is no refining capacity. That is a falsehood. There is refining capacity. Instead of using Canadian refining capacity that exists, we are shipping the raw bitumen to the U.S. We are shipping out the jobs by the tens of thousands per pipeline and they have approved several pipelines. We are going back to an era where Canada exported raw

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logs and imported furniture. This is the mentality of the Conservatives: nothing for Canada, everything for the oil companies, nothing for future generations.

**Ms. Irene Mathysen (London—Fanshawe, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, this budget implementation bill we are debating is disappointing.

We need a budget that is creative, has foresight, and addresses not only the needs of today but the needs of the future. It is crucial that we build a sound budget that will help promote and create jobs today, and a budget that addresses the needs of our aging population and the fiscal challenges that poses.

With its continued focus on corporate tax cuts instead of job creation, this budget is not what Canadian families need right now, or ever. The Conservatives have no workable plan for fixing front-line health care, strengthening public pensions, rewarding businesses that create jobs, or introducing practical measures to take the strain off the family budget. The government's budget does not forward the initiative to lift every senior out of poverty.

I would like to remind the Minister of Finance that my motion which passed unanimously in this House in June stated:

That, in the opinion of this House, ending seniors' poverty in Canada is fiscally feasible, and, therefore, the House calls on the government to take immediate steps to increase the Guaranteed Income Supplement sufficiently to achieve that goal.

This budget implementation bill has failed to take that motion into account despite its unanimous passage. It seems that the government is only willing to pay lip service to democracy and the seniors struggling to make ends meet.

The government agenda is clear: go full steam ahead and cut \$11 billion from programs and services Canadians rely on, underfund important programs, and continue to cater to big business with corporate tax cuts.

I wish to be clear. The money was readily available. We had the money to lift seniors out of poverty in the present and the money to address additional expenses the government will face in the future as our population continues to age. Instead of investing in Canada, the Conservatives chose to saddle the treasury and Canadians with corporate tax giveaways that will not guarantee one new job.

The Conservatives will continue with their corporate tax giveaways. On January 1, 2012, they will hand over an additional \$2 billion to the most profitable corporations. Let me say that figure again, \$2 billion.

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The Parliamentary Budget Officer's mandate is to provide independent analysis to Parliament on the state of the nation's finances, the government's estimates, and trends in the Canadian economy. The Parliamentary Budget Officer's analysis found that the corporate tax cuts will cost the government \$11.5 billion over three years, \$11.5 billion with no guarantee of a single new job. Imagine the help to poor seniors and the supports for job creation \$11.5 billion could achieve.

Jobs are a priority. They are a priority in my riding. London has the highest unemployment rate in Canada. It has been repeatedly hit with the downturn in the manufacturing sector, changes in the insurance industry, and of course, the collapse of the North American auto sector.

This budget does very little to help Londoners recover from all the job losses in our community. There are no specific measures to help the automotive sector, no plan to help families hit with rising costs due to the HST, and no changes to EI to help ease the burden on families struggling to find work. Over the next five years EI premiums will exceed benefits by \$15 billion. We can afford to help unemployed workers and their families.

I know federal development Ontario has \$20 million over the next two years to renew the eastern Ontario development program, but that money is spread all over the region. I worry that Londoners in southwestern Ontario will again get the short end of the stick.

I would like to add that Londoners are not the exception. Despite the Conservatives' claims around job creation, we have 300,000 more unemployed people since before the recession. I would point out that the overwhelming proportion of jobs created were part-time.

● (1730)

The number of involuntary part-time workers is now over 500,000. A person cannot raise a family on part-time work. A person cannot save for retirement on part-time work. A person cannot stimulate the economy on part-time work.

I repeat, the budget fails to make life more affordable for London families still struggling to recover from the effects of the recession.

The tax breaks to big business are a frightening precedent. It means a serious decrease in revenue for the federal government of close to \$12 billion and will have profound ramifications in the future. This forfeited money is needed to address the decreasing tax base as more and more of our population become seniors and begin to retire. This presents a very real problem as the amount of revenue for the government decreases while demand for services continues to rise.

Those who are seniors today will not benefit as they should from the budget. The government heralds its increase to the guaranteed income supplement, yet that money is nowhere near enough. The budget provides \$300 million per year for a small increase to the GIS: \$600 for single seniors and \$840 for couples. This is less than half of what New Democrats asked for and it will not come close to pulling every Canadian senior out of poverty.

The government's solution to seniors' poverty and seniors' access to resources is to offer tax breaks and trumpet the new horizons program. Both fall far short of what we really need: investment in

home care; investment in pharmacare; increased access to resources; appropriate and affordable housing; and investment in geriatric studies. Investments in our community and in our families are what we need, not corporate tax breaks.

Most seniors cannot afford to cash in on the promised tax breaks in the budget because they do not earn enough. I am not sure how to make this any clearer to the members sitting opposite. The people who are struggling the most—seniors, single mothers, those who have lost their jobs—are the people for whom the government should provide help. The government has an obligation to help. Tax credits are of little use to the unemployed, the working poor and those struggling on pensions. They do not have the money to spend to get the credit, or they do not pay enough in taxes to qualify.

The new horizons program is the only investment the government is making in our seniors. There is so much more and much smarter ways to invest tax dollars to ensure our seniors are lifted out of poverty, have access to resources available to them, and are able to choose where they want to live. Dignity in retirement should be a right, not a privilege.

Our actions now will have an impact on how we treat our seniors in the future. If we fail to invest and make plans for the aging population, it is our own retirement that will be in jeopardy. Future seniors will not have the choice to age in their homes, will not have access to the care that is required.

There are many low or no cost ways to address seniors' poverty and these can be found in the government's own reports. In 2005, the National Advisory Council on Aging published its report, "Aging in Poverty in Canada". It made many recommendations.

It recommended that the federal government increase the guaranteed income supplement to at least the low income cutoffs recognized by Statistics Canada.

It recommended that the federal government continue to increase its efforts to reach the number of people eligible for old age security and Canada pension plan benefits but who fail to apply for them.

It recommended that the government make public the number of eligible seniors who have not applied for the various program benefits and allow full retroactive benefits, plus interest, when someone applies late under the Canada pension plan since it is a contribution-based program.



It recommended that the federal government cease suspending guaranteed income supplement, allowance and survivor allowance benefits when tax returns are filed late or when renewal forms are not submitted. It recommended that the federal government instead increase its efforts to encourage renewal by sending reminders over a six-month period before reducing monthly benefits by 10%.

It recommended that the federal government allow seniors to earn an income of 10% of the benefits received by the old age security program before reducing the guaranteed income supplement and the allowance.

It recommended that the federal government and other levels of government increase their financial investment in social housing for seniors. It recommended that governments need to ensure that accommodation rates for residents of long-term care establishments do not exceed current market prices for similar room and board services in the local community.

It recommended that the government must also ensure automatic and compulsory sharing of pension rights under the Canada pension plan, employer pension funds, and retirement savings plans following divorce or legal separation.

In conclusion, by investing in our seniors now and by investing in job creation for all Canadians, we will be helping not only today's seniors but the people of the future.

● (1735)

[Translation]

**Ms. Ève Péclet (La Pointe-de-l'Île, NDP):** Madam Speaker, I would like to commend the hon. member for her speech.

In fact, the mistake that the government made here is that it invested in only one sector of the economy, the private sector. Indeed, we find this very surprising. As the hon. member said, the government provided \$2 billion in tax credits to large corporations. For several years, the government has been giving large corporations more and more money. As a result, the coffers of these companies are full, but billions of dollars have been lost that could have been spent to help youth, seniors and families, particularly since the OECD has found that Canadian families have one of the highest rates of debt in all the OECD countries.

I would therefore like the hon. member to comment on the government's economic policies and the impact they will have on our families, seniors and youth.

● (1740)

[English]

**Ms. Irene Mathysen:** Madam Speaker, one of the things the present government and its predecessor seem to have forgotten is that Canada was built on a balance of public and private investment.

We see private investment in commodities, which, interestingly enough, is not benefiting us at this point. We see investment in the public sector in the health care and services that people need. That balance created a strong economy.

We are going to see a reduction in public services as a result of this budget. That reduction, as well as the cost-cutting we are going to experience over the next few months, is going to disrupt that

important balance. It also means that the people who depend on those services will be lost. Seniors and young families will not be able to access the kinds of services they need.

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, one of the questions that it would be good to get a New Democrat response to is with regard to trade between Canada and the United States. I have posed this question before.

The United States is talking a lot about buying American. I am trying to get an understanding of where the New Democrats are on those types of policies.

Inside the House of Commons I would hope they would recognize that the buy American policy is to the detriment of thousands of jobs here in Canada. However, the leader of the NDP in the province of Ontario is promoting a "buy Ontario" policy.

Does the member see that as a contradiction? Does the buy American hurt jobs—

**The Deputy Speaker:** The hon. member for London—Fanshawe.

**Ms. Irene Mathysen:** Madam Speaker, there has been a tradition in this country of provinces making sure that they spend their money locally. I believe absolutely in fair trade; however, the NAFTA of 1994 was certainly not helpful in that regard.

I introduced a bill in this House called the Made in Canada Act. It was meant to address the issue of the buy American policy. It was NAFTA compliant, but it said that when governments procure, they should procure locally to create jobs. The Conservatives and Liberals voted against it.

When we come to buy American in this round, I think it is fascinating that on the last round, when we were at the end of the stimulus, the Americans got access to \$30 billion of Canadian stimulus. We got access to \$3 billion. That is the Conservative government.

**Mr. Bernard Trottier (Etobicoke—Lakeshore, CPC):** Madam Speaker, I hear a lot of comments about squeezing private sector companies, especially banks and oil companies. Of course, all other companies would get the squeeze too if the NDP tax hikes were to be implemented.

Can the member not appreciate or admit that our plan to reduce taxes on corporations, including banks, oil companies, manufacturers and everybody else, is the way to stimulate growth, stimulate investment and create jobs in this country?

**Ms. Irene Mathysen:** Madam Speaker, absolutely not. Last year there were \$22 billion in profits to big banks, and \$11 billion of it went to CEO compensation.

We know that big oil gets all kinds of tax breaks from the government. The last time I went to the pumps, I did not see any need for big oil to receive the largesse of the taxpayer.

● (1745)

**Mrs. Cheryl Gallant (Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke, CPC):** Madam Speaker, I will be splitting my time with the member for Leeds—Grenville.

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As this is my first speech in the new Parliament, I am pleased to thank the smart voters of Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke for once again allowing me the privilege of representing their interests in the Government of Canada. I pledge faithfully to represent their interests to the best of my ability.

I congratulate the Prime Minister for the leadership role he has played in the good governance of Canada, a skill that continues to be acknowledged by thoughtful Canadians and the international community.

I will also to take this moment to thank my family. My husband Jamie and daughters Chantal, Lauren, Ellyse and Amelia stood by me during the election, and I thank them for their love, support and patience.

I also thank the people who came out to campaign during the election. I owe them tremendous thanks from the bottom of my heart. I can assure them that their generosity will be remembered.

I wish also to take this opportunity to salute the women and men at CFB Petawawa, which is located in my riding of Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke. I gratefully acknowledge the support they have given me since I was first elected in the fall of 2000 and most recently in the last election. The message I receive from our military electors in every election in which I have been a candidate has been clear and short: “Keep fighting. We need you”. I thank them for their support and I will not let them down. I have their back.

The legislation we now have before us, keeping Canada's economy and jobs growing act, is all about the people in my riding of Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke. They are those who make a living off the land, be it farming or forestry. Many of the traditional sources of employment, such as the working forest, are under severe stress, and I am here for them.

I have to pay special thanks to the Minister of International Trade and the Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food for addressing the unique problems we have in our community with the forestry industry.

Unlike when I was first elected back in 2000, when there were only two MPs in the Conservative caucus to represent all of Ontario, today there is a large, strong and vibrant Ontario caucus. I look forward to working with my many new caucus colleagues to make sure the interests of Canadians, particularly in rural Ontario, always have a voice.

As the MP for Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke, a sprawling rural riding in the Upper Ottawa Valley in eastern Ontario, I depend on Valley residents and their common sense approach to life to guide me in Parliament.

I am in good company when it comes to taking this approach. Valley wisdom was recognized by the most electorally successful Conservative premier of Ontario, Leslie Frost, when he would recount his favourite story about a judge in the village of Killaloe objecting to the pleas of a big city lawyer in his courtroom. He stated, “What you say may be in all them books, all right, but it ain't the Law of Killaloe”. Too often today, with the rise of more government and the myriad laws and regulations that are the result of

too much government, decisions lack the element of common sense Judge Dunlop was dispensing from his rural courtroom in Killaloe.

Canada's economic action plan, a plan that was approved by an absolute majority of voters in my riding of Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke, is imbued with the same common sense. For example, unlike the official opposition, we recognize the simple fact that companies do not pay taxes, people do. When taxes are raised on employers, they are forced to cut costs, which means layoffs. It also means that a business must pass on extra expenses to consumers before the customers are lost.

It is this common sense approach by our government that has resulted in the creation of nearly 600,000 new jobs since 2009. That is why we see measures like the one in the legislation before us today, which provides a temporary hiring credit for small businesses to encourage additional hiring. It extends the accelerated capital cost allowance treatment for investments in manufacturing and processing machinery and equipment for two years to support the economic sector.

● (1750)

The best social program is a job.

The law of Killaloe is about making difficult decisions on behalf of the people of Canada without forgetting who we are and where and how we live. I am pleased to share this story, as the Prime Minister and his family joined Valley residents in Killaloe for that Valley tradition, the farm pig roast, for Canada Day a couple of summers ago.

The Prime Minister understands the average Canadian, who works hard, pays taxes and plays by the rules. On May 2, the majority of voters in my riding of Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke chose to elect a national, stable, majority Conservative government. We in the Conservative government believe that public policy should be driven by facts and evidence, not by ideology. Every step of the way, we will be introducing into this House policies supporting the facts, evidence and common sense.

The Conservative Party of Canada recognizes that in order to be an environmental world leader, we need to focus on clean air, clean water, clean land and clean energy. Nuclear is the key to any national emission reduction plan, and I have worked very hard to keep the Canadian neutron facility and the need for a new multi-purpose research reactor on the science agenda of this country.

In the 1990s, the old Liberal government cut the budget of AECL by 42%, and we saw the fallout of those cuts. AECL then made the decision that basic nuclear research should be discontinued at Chalk River Laboratories unless it supported the commercial division of AECL. The Auditor General observed AECL could not operate properly because the Liberal government refused to approve any business plan.



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The 2006 federal election of the Conservative Party was a game changer for the good of Chalk River Laboratories, of AECL and of all the Upper Ottawa Valley. The restructuring of AECL has been a key component of our government's strategy for Canada to be a clean energy superpower, and the latest budget allocation of \$405 million is evidence of our commitment to the environment and to the need to provide dependable economic sources of electricity for the Canadian consumer.

This support comes at a time when the current Ontario provincial government pursues a reckless policy of electricity rate hikes that will see the average ratepayer's electricity bill go from \$1,700 to \$4,000 a year to pay the \$200,000 annual per-job subsidy that is hidden in the fine print of the so-called Green Energy Act. Unlike the opposition parties, our Conservative government is committed to affordable energy prices that allow seniors and other Canadians who are on fixed incomes to be able to afford to live in their own homes.

Support for Canada's military that was announced in last year's budget does not change. Construction of the new Chinook helicopter hangar at CFB Petawawa is proceeding as planned, as outlined in the government's Canada First defence strategy, and jobs have come along with that needed expansion. Petawawa is experiencing record growth and it is going into roads, sewer infrastructure, housing and all sorts of things that the incoming soldiers and support personnel are going to need with the new helicopter squadron.

The Town of Petawawa, like all municipalities in Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke, will benefit from the budget measure to legislate the annual \$2 billion gas tax fund expenditure from the federal government to municipal infrastructure.

Our forestry sector will benefit from the \$60 million announced in the budget to assist it to innovate and to tap into new opportunities abroad. Forestry has been a mainstay in the Upper Ottawa Valley for many generations, and I am committed to working with our local foresters to keep that employment base.

● (1755)

In addition to specific budget announcements, like AECL and the \$20 million announced over two years for the eastern Ontario development program, there are a number of specific measures that are being used to help individuals. We will continue on with that after.

[Translation]

**Ms. Ève Péclet (La Pointe-de-l'Île, NDP):** Madam Speaker, I heard the hon. member say:

[English]

"Unlike the official opposition, we understand that companies do not pay taxes, people do".

[Translation]

I would like the hon. member to explain what she meant by this. Is she trying to tell us—

[English]

**Hon. John Baird:** We pass it on to you.

**Ms. Ève Péclet:** But that is what she said.

[Translation]

I would like the hon. member to explain what she meant by that. Does she mean that companies should not have to pay any taxes? Who would bear the tax burden? I do not know if she is living in a fantasy world. I would like her to tell me who is going to pay the taxes. If it is not the companies that are making billions and billions of dollars in profit each year, who is going to pay them? Will it be the people of Canada?

[English]

**Mrs. Cheryl Gallant:** Madam Speaker, corporations pay about 14% of all tax revenue. We want to keep the tax levels steady and follow through with the reductions for small businesses along the way, because they are our job creators. Further to this, the employment tax credit that we are implementing would encourage even more hiring.

Compared to 2010 over to 2011, increases in contributions on the part of the employer to employment insurance, up to \$1,000, will be reimbursed for that purpose.

**Mr. Ted Hsu (Kingston and the Islands, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, will the government build a new research reactor to replace NRU? Does the government believe that nuclear energy is the answer to climate change?

**Mrs. Cheryl Gallant:** Madam Speaker, I will continue to keep the important planning for a new research reactor on the agenda of the government.

In terms of nuclear energy, it is a key component in the broad spectrum of energy production required to reduce the carbon levels by 20% by 2020.

**Mr. Bernard Trottier (Etobicoke—Lakeshore, CPC):** Madam Speaker, I heard some questions from the members opposite concerning corporate tax rates and how corporations do not pay taxes. Maybe she could explain to the House who the typical shareholders of a company are. They are perhaps pensioners regular shareholders, people saving for their retirement or people having shares in their registered education savings plans. Maybe she could explain the impact of raising corporate taxes on those companies' abilities to actually have a return on that investment.

**Mrs. Cheryl Gallant:** Madam Speaker, what we hear continually from across the way is about charging higher taxes to companies in the energy sector, for example. About 25% of Canadians' pension plans are invested in the energy sector. If we were to start taxing this sector instead of continuing to grow it and fund Canadians' pension plans, we would put the futures of those retired Canadians at risk.

**M. Mathieu Ravignat (Pontiac, NPD):** Madam Speaker, I have a question related to nuclear energy. As we know, Chalk River has very old facilities. Some of those facilities are 50 years old. I would like to ask the member whether she thinks this is a viable solution for energy needs.

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**Mrs. Cheryl Gallant:** Madam Speaker, it is apparent that the member opposite does not understand what the experimental research reactor at Chalk River does in supporting the CANDU fleet reactors that we have across provinces in Canada and around the world. We have, after a decade of darkness in funding to AECL, provided unprecedented money so that it can upkeep and continue on re-licensing the reactor until 2016.

• (1800)

**Mr. Gordon Brown (Leeds—Grenville, CPC):** Madam Speaker, in her presentation, the hon. member for Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke talked about some of the things that the folks in Killaloe think about. I look around my riding at some of the small villages like Landsdowne, Newboro, Maynard, Roebuck and other small villages and towns, and that is very much what the people in my riding think about, and they think about what we have done in this budget and the things they wanted to see in it.

I specifically want to talk about some of those things that are in the budget and some of those measures that are important to Leeds and Grenville.

I was very pleased when the Minister of Finance introduced the budget back in June. It was what we campaigned on and what we promised we would present. We are following through on our commitments. I noted at the time that it was a good budget for Leeds and Grenville and that it reflected what I heard in my extensive prebudget consultations last winter.

The budget supports families, seniors, workers and job creators. We have weathered the economic downturn in great shape but our economy is still fragile and the budget concentrates on continuing the recovery.

As well, it is keeping the economy on track. One change in the budget is the accelerated deficit reduction plan. We would see the deficit being eliminated by 2014 instead 2015, which was another important issue to the folks in my riding. They understood the need for the deficit but they also wanted to see it eliminated as soon as possible.

Several of the measures from the budget that have already been implemented were important to my riding. These included renewed funding for the eastern Ontario development program with the expenditure of \$20 million over the next two years. This has been an important program for Leeds—Grenville. It was one of the key things that I heard during my prebudget consultations from municipal leaders and constituents. It will continue to be an important factor in further job creation in Leeds—Grenville.

I should note that the work that is undertaken by the community futures development programs in Leeds—Grenville, the organizations that distribute the ODP funding. These folks live and work in the riding and they know the communities they serve. They do an excellent job of getting value for our money while growing our economy at the same time.

Two of the other important measures that have already been implemented are the top up for low income seniors who rely on the guaranteed income supplement, and the \$400 million that are going to the restart of the home retrofit program, which will help people reduce energy costs in their homes.

My offices in Brockville and here in Ottawa received numerous calls about both of those programs as soon as they were announced.

We are here today to talk about the implementation of more measures from the budget, so I will spend the rest of my time talking about these.

Later this month, I will be attending an announcement in the city of Brockville where officials will gather to celebrate a new energy saving green initiative undertaken by the city. This initiative will save the city money through the use of renewable resources. It was partially funded by the gas tax fund. This will be the second major announcement about the use of this particular fund in that city in the past two years.

Two years ago, we helped celebrate the new street light program that was being undertaken in Brockville. The city was replacing all of its street lights with more energy efficient models using the gas tax fund. The budget implementation bill would make the fund permanent. It will provide predictable, long-term infrastructure funding for municipalities, such as Brockville, so they can tackle projects that will help them save money and save energy for the long term.

A second measure that is being implemented under the bill is the volunteer firefighters tax credit. I heard loud and clear from our volunteer firefighters in Leeds and Grenville that this was something they wanted to see. The day the budget was tabled in June, one of our local fire chiefs, whose department is all volunteers, spoke out about the need for this tax credit. It would help volunteers cover some of their ongoing costs and it is just a token of our appreciation for the work that they do on our behalf. Many folks do not understand that these volunteers have the same professional requirements as full-time, permanent firefighters, but our government understands that and this credit would help recognize that.

In 2006, our government introduced a children's fitness tax credit that was appreciated by the families in my riding whose children were involved in sporting activities. At the same time, I heard from many individuals and organizations that this benefit should be extended to children's artistic and cultural endeavours. These, too, cost families money.

• (1805)

I was pleased to see in the spring budget that our government committed to the same treatment for families for the cost of artistic, cultural, recreational and developmental activities. With this implementation bill, these families would see a 15% credit on up to \$500 of eligible fees for these activities. Since June, I have spoken with a number of parents and organizers of children's arts activities who have expressed appreciation that we have listened to their suggestions.



Families today face greater pressures than ever before, with both parents working to make ends meet and growing families to care for, dealing with an infirm loved one is an added burden. Our introduction in this budget of a new family caregiver tax credit would help those families. This 15% non-refundable tax credit would provide tax relief for caregivers of all types of infirm, dependent relatives, including, for the first time, spouses, common-law partners and children.

As well, our government, in this bill, would be removing the limit on the amount of eligible expenses caregivers can claim under the medical expense tax credit in respect of financially dependent relatives.

I want to talk briefly about the government subsidies to federal political parties. This has been a big issue in my riding for a long time. Since our government took office, we have taken action to take the influence of money out of politics in this country. We eliminated large personal donations to parties and we have banned donations from corporations and unions, all to ensure reasonable accountability.

As folks in my riding like to point out, we also have a duty to use their tax money wisely and for the constructive good of the entire country, especially when they themselves are struggling to make ends meet.

That is why, in the campaign last spring and in the June budget, we promised to introduce legislation to gradually reduce the \$2.04 per year per vote subsidy in 51-cent increments starting April 1, 2012 until it is completely eliminated by 2015-16. This would generate savings ramping up to \$30 million by 2015-16.

We have always opposed direct taxpayer subsidies to political parties as we believe that political parties should rely primarily on their own supporters for their financing. Political parties can issue tax receipts to their supporters and they already receive a partial reimbursement of their election expenses. By gradually phasing out this subsidy that has been paid to parties, we will all have time to increase our fundraising activities to compensate where required.

Finally, I want to talk about the measures we are taking for job creation and economic growth. As I spoke with people in my riding during my prebudget consultations last winter, this was the area of greatest concern, an area where we can have a great deal of influence. My riding, more than most, I suspect, was especially hard hit in the past 15 years as manufacturers left. In many instances, long-time plants that had been around for generations closed their doors, sometimes without saying goodbye to the workers.

Slowly but surely, we are beginning to see a bit of a turnaround in some areas. Just yesterday, for example, in the local daily newspaper in Brockville, David Beatty, the CEO of one of the city's leading manufacturers, Canarm, was talking about his company's expansion in Brockville. The headline read "Canarm head sees return of manufacturing jobs." He noted that over the next decade we will see an increase in manufacturing jobs returning to Canada. While it will take time, the pendulum will swing back, he indicated.

We have already seen some of this as high transportation costs and increased living standards in some of the economically emerging

countries that have captured some of our former jobs have started to eat into the previously available profits.

While there is good news on the horizon, we must still provide a boost where we can to ensure that our businesses and industries are ready to take advantage of any and all opportunities.

We have taken many measures: providing a temporary hiring credit for small businesses to encourage additional hiring; expanding tax support for clean energy generation to encourage green investments; and simplifying customs and tariffs in order to facilitate trade and lower the administrative burden for businesses. Many in my riding often send their goods across the border.

Our government is focused on jobs and the economy. We have accomplished a great deal for Canadians over the past several years and we will continue. The implementation of this bill will add to our strengths.

• (1810)

[Translation]

**Ms. Charmaine Borg (Terrebonne—Blainville, NDP):** Madam Speaker, as we all know, October 1 was the International Day of Older Persons. To celebrate, I went to a seniors' centre, where a woman told me that she was waiting to die and that she was in a hurry to die because she has not had enough money to pay her rent for the past two years. Personally, I was very saddened to hear this comment. How is it that we are living in a country where people want to die because they do not have enough money?

I would like to ask the hon. member what the \$2 billion that is being given to huge corporations could do for this woman and for all seniors in Canada.

[English]

**Mr. Gordon Brown:** Madam Speaker, it is important what we do for our seniors. We have taken measures to help our seniors. I could give a whole speech on things that this government has done to help seniors and those who have been in need for many years, since we formed government back in 2006.

However, when I hear about taxing corporations, we all know that corporations do pay a lot of tax. How many times do we open up a newspaper and read that jobs are returning. I just spoke a few moments ago about jobs returning to Canada. We are seeing this, we are seeing an improvement, we are seeing advances in advanced manufacturing, and we are creating new jobs in this country. Raising taxes on job creators is not the way to bring those jobs to Canada.

**Mr. Ted Hsu (Kingston and the Islands, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, I would like to dispute one point made by my hon. colleague from Leeds—Grenville relating to the per vote subsidy.

*Government Orders*

Quite often, when I went door to door, I talked to people who were not going to vote for me. They wanted to vote for a candidate who did not have a chance of winning. They did not have a lot of money to spend on things like donating to political parties. However, they felt that if they voted for somebody, even if they did not win, their vote counted for something because \$2.00 would go to the political party they really wanted to support.

I do not think it is taxpayers' dollars that are going to political parties. It is the action of a voter. It is making votes count. I think that is important.

**Mr. Gordon Brown:** Madam Speaker, I want to thank my colleague from Kingston and the Islands, a neighbouring riding, for the question. Many of the people who work in Kingston and vice versa, in Leeds—Grenville, live in each of our ridings, so there is a lot of crossover there.

However, I can tell members that this is something that the people in my riding of Leeds—Grenville found highly offensive. They wanted to see an end to this. They wanted to ensure that political parties raise their own money. It is hard work raising money. We have to work hard. If we just expect that we are going to fund our political party solely on public subsidies and do no work to raise money on your own, then I am not sure that is what Canadians want. I know the people in my riding were very happy that we are doing this. In fact, I was speaking to someone just yesterday who said that this cannot happen fast enough.

**Mr. Jeff Watson (Essex, CPC):** Madam Speaker, I appreciate the intervention of my colleague from Leeds—Grenville, who is doing some tremendously good work, both with the Canada-U.S. group and here in Parliament on behalf of his constituents. In his intervention, he mentioned the eastern Ontario development program and our government's renewal of that program.

First, would he elaborate on the importance to the community? Second, I think his constituents need to know how hard he has worked, in terms of ensuring that this program is renewed. Third, would he comment as to how he feels about the opposition voting against that measure?

**Mr. Gordon Brown:** Madam Speaker, I want to thank the member for Essex for that question because it is a very important issue.

In my riding of Leeds—Grenville, we are served by three community development corporations. They oversee the funding that goes to the eastern Ontario development program. This is money that goes to the smaller communities in order to start up and advance. It helps businesses grow and provides training. There are many components of this fund, and I know that it makes an impact. It is creating real jobs in our communities.

However, the benefit of this is that the decision on how this money is spent is decided by the local boards. The boards know our communities. They reflect our community priorities. It is money well spent. In fact, I would venture to say that it may even be the best investment in job creation in this country.

• (1815)

[Translation]

## BILL C-13—TIME ALLOCATION MOTION

**Hon. Peter Van Loan (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, CPC):** Madam Speaker, I would like to advise that an agreement could not be reached under the provisions of Standing Order 78(1) or 78(2) with respect to the second reading stage of Bill C-13, An Act to implement certain provisions of the 2011 budget as updated on June 6, 2011 and other measures.

Under the provisions of Standing Order 78(3), I give notice that a minister of the Crown will propose at the next sitting a motion to allot a specific number of days or hours for the consideration and disposal of proceedings at the said stage.

[English]

I would like to give the House the courtesy of knowing that I intend to propose that three further days of debate be allotted, including today. I understand that this is more than the average time for a budget bill at second reading for at least the past two decades. In fact, it would be more hours of debate than any Liberal majority government's budget bill got during this time.

My aim is to provide the House with sufficient debate on these important economic measures, including a hiring tax credit for small businesses. At the same time, it would bring certainty to the process and aid members of the House on the finance committee in managing their busy work schedules.

**The Deputy Speaker:** On a point of order, the hon. member for Winnipeg North.

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux:** Madam Speaker, I believe the government House leader was rising on a point of order. I would like to provide comment on the point of order that he raised.

**The Deputy Speaker:** It is a minister's prerogative to give notice of this. This is not a question of debate. The minister gave us notice and we will move on.

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux:** Madam Speaker, on a point of order.

We do govern based on traditions and so forth inside the chamber. I think that we should be concerned when government brings forward legislation and has this natural instinct to bring in some form of closure or limit on debate inside the chamber. First of all, the government should try to come up with consensus before it takes quick action—

**The Deputy Speaker:** Order, please. When this motion comes before the House, there will be 30 minutes allotted for questions to the minister. At that time, the hon. member can raise his concerns.

Resuming debate, the hon. member for Rivière-du-Nord

[Translation]

**Mr. Pierre Dionne Labelle (Rivière-du-Nord, NDP):** Madam Speaker, before addressing some aspects of this bill, I would like to congratulate my NDP colleagues for their clear and pertinent suggestions in response to the government's empty proposals.



*Government Orders*

In my presentation, I will be using some words that the Conservative government hates, such as “tax”, “poverty” and “social programs”. Canada is not far behind the U.S. when it comes to the dubious distinction of having the largest gap between rich and poor, and the provisions of this bill will make no difference. This trend is the result of changes in both markets and government policy. It is worrisome not only in terms of intergenerational equity and equality among people, but also because of the quality of life and economic development issues.

Income disparity between rich and poor has increased more quickly in Canada than in the United States over the past 15 years and, with the arrival of this Conservative government, became even more noticeable. Among developed nations, the American society is the most unequal, more so than the United Kingdom, Italy, Australia and Japan. Canada comes next, in fifth position, where the richest get 40% of revenues and the poorest 20% of the population only gets 7% of the income.

This growth in income disparity is not unique to Canada. It is prevalent among countries that have adopted neo-conservative policies over the past few years. Experts say that this phenomenon is related to the set of factors at play in market forces and to the institutional framework. Some of the market forces involved are globalization of the economy, which leads to low-skilled workers in rich countries competing against those in poor countries. The initial result is that, in the case of the former, there are job losses and salary reductions. I will come back to salary reductions and the loss of purchasing power by Canada's middle class. Technological change also contributes to this trend. However, I would like to focus on the nature of neo-conservative policies.

One of the most frequently cited factors related to the institutional framework is the weakening of unions. The balance of power between workers and employers has been eroded in recent years. We need better unions to ensure better social justice in Canada. Mechanisms for the redistribution of wealth—such as taxation—that ensure that all wealth does not flow into the same pockets, have been weakened. Social programs are another means of redistributing wealth.

I will speak about unemployment and give a few statistics. I know that our friends across the way like to pat themselves on the back. I know that they live in a bubble and see everything through rose-coloured glasses. There is a crisis all around us in western economies. The United States has an astounding amount of debt and is almost unable to pay it back. Every day, Europe is on the brink of a crisis and here in Canada, they are boasting, saying that everything is going well, saying that the economy is humming. But their bubble could burst at any moment. The Conservatives' illusions are very fragile.

I want to come back to the issue of unemployment. If we were to ask the Conservative members how many people in Canada are unemployed, I am not sure that many of them would be able to give the exact number. But here it is: 1.5 million people in Canada are unemployed. There was a significant increase in July. If we count all the people who are looking for work and those who are receiving employment insurance benefits, the unemployment rate is 11.1%. In July, that rate was 9.4%. But they are saying that everything is fine, so nothing is being done about it.

•(1820)

They say that cutting corporate taxes will create jobs. That is not true. It is entirely untrue. The facts complete disprove such claims.

Just look at the example of Ontario, where the combined federal-provincial corporate tax rate was cut by 45% between 1999 and 2010. During this same period, investments in equipment and machinery dropped from 8% to 5%. The money these companies saved in taxes was not reinvested in the economy, did not create jobs, and was not used to buy machinery. Where did this money go? It went into hedge funds. It went into speculative bubbles. And what happens to bubbles? Sooner or later, they burst.

I want to come back to the issue of unemployment. The Conservative government keeps repeating that we have recovered from the recession. The official employment rate in 2011 was 61.9% and 63.4% in 2007. We have not yet reached the pre-recession employment rate. It is clear that the Conservative strategy of doing nothing is not exactly helping kick-start the economy.

“Inequality, poverty and the middle class”—that is the title of this part of my speech which, I am sure, our friends across the way are extremely interested in. I see one who seems quite interested.

Inequality has increased in Canada because the income of the wealthy—and, even more so, of the very wealthy—has increased faster than all other groups. The gap between the average of the richest 20% and the poorest 20% in Canada also grew from \$92,300 in 1976 to \$117,500 in 2009.

The gap between the rich and poor does not speak to the situation of middle-income Canadians. It appears that this group did not fare much better over that time, according to the Conference Board of Canada [an organization that is generally well respected by the government]. The median income of Canadian households increased from \$45,800 in 1976 to \$48,300 in 2009, which represents a very modest increase of only 5.5% over 33 years.

The middle class is what drives our economy. Middle-class Canadians from Montreal's south shore were told today that, not only would their purchasing power not increase, but they would have to pay a toll every day when they cross the bridge to go to work. What an excellent way to encourage the middle class and to help Canadians get out of debt. I have not mentioned it yet, but household debt is skyrocketing; we have one of the highest rates of the OECD. Instead of coming up with solutions to increase the purchasing power of middle-class households, the government is putting tolls on bridges.

If I were in their shoes, I would be very discouraged by today's announcement. It will cost them \$50, \$60 or \$100 a week just to go to work. That is unbelievable. Why were things simpler in the past? We built a bridge and people crossed it. Now the government is coming up with all kinds of stories. It is trying to convince Montrealers that it is paying for a bridge for them. The federal government will not be paying for this bridge. It is the people of Montreal and of the south shore who will end up paying for it.

This brings me to the end of my speech, as I am sharing my time with the hon. member for Hamilton Mountain.

•(1825)

[English]

**Mr. Malcolm Allen (Welland, NDP):** Madam Speaker, I want to thank my colleague for his enlightenment about the bridge and its application.

*Adjournment Proceedings*

I would like to do a little arithmetic because it seems that our friends on the other side need help with that. They do not like statistics but sometimes they help enlighten the debate, so I am going to quote some statistics.

In July 2007 approximately 16,848,300 Canadians had jobs. In 2011 that number is 17,344,200—

**The Deputy Speaker:** Order. Because I will have to interrupt the House at 6:30 p.m., I would like to give the hon. member an opportunity to respond very briefly.

[Translation]

**Mr. Pierre Dionne Labelle:** Madam Speaker, I love my colleague's question.

I am not so sure about the exact argument. We would like to see this government use the budget to show some concern for economic recovery, naturally, and some concern as well for social justice and for improving social programs and social housing. This budget should ensure that Canadians who lose their jobs or become ill do not end up in extreme poverty. We would like to see measures in this budget to make Canada a more generous country where there is more solidarity. That is not the case.

• (1830)

**The Deputy Speaker:** When we resume this debate, the hon. member will have three minutes for questions and comments.

## ADJOURNMENT PROCEEDINGS

A motion to adjourn the House under Standing Order 38 deemed to have been moved.

[English]

### EMPLOYMENT

**Ms. Joyce Murray (Vancouver Quadra, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, on June 21 I asked a question in the House as follows:

—the Conservatives are now making cuts they knew about well before the recent election but chose to hide. On the chopping block are thousands of jobs, including the entire Audit Services Canada department, the auditors that serve all the other departments of government.

As I commented at the time, that is a very self-serving move for a government that was found to be in contempt due to secrecy and dishonesty before the last election. I received an inadequate response to my question. I want to make a few more comments.

One should not be surprised by the government's decision to cut jobs from the public service given that the key to its deficit reduction plan seems to be to cut federal jobs and essential public services while putting a whopping big hole in the treasury with its ill-timed next round of corporate tax giveaways to large companies. I remind members opposite that these tax levels without that additional tax break are already 25% below the comparable tax levels in the United States. These are companies that are already competitive from a tax perspective.

The current Conservative government is presiding over \$11 billion in cuts and has decided essentially to transfer billions of dollars from services for Canadians through civil servants into the corporate bank

accounts of large companies which, on average, do not create jobs or have not been net job creators over the last two decades. The thing that is particularly egregious is that the government knew about these cuts and had planned for them before the election but chose to hide that information from the Canadian public during the election.

During the campaign, the Prime Minister said, "Anybody who says you can't find money in Ottawa without cutting vital services to people is simply living in a fantasy world". I think we have a Prime Minister who may be living in a fantasy world if he believes that one can make major cuts to departments like the Department of Fisheries and Oceans and Environment Canada, and to scientists and ozone and climate change expertise without harming the long-term well-being of our country and Canadians.

It is particularly disturbing that on the chopping block was Audit Services Canada, an organization with "a 50-year track record of helping to improve public sector accountability and operations". That is something that is badly needed in the Conservative government: accountability. This organization's sole purpose is to audit government expenditures to ensure that the Canadian public is getting value for its money and the best bang for the buck. That is an important function.

I would like to point out that the former Treasury Board president said that attrition will account for virtually all public service job reductions, but that simply is not so. I have a list of the positions that are being cut in various organizations like the Department of Fisheries and Oceans, Environment Canada, the Bank of Canada, the Department of National Defence, 687 positions at Public Works and Government Services, and even positions at Treasury Board.

The government's approach to managing its deficit is wrong-headed.

• (1835)

[Translation]

**Mr. Jacques Gourde (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Works and Government Services, for Official Languages and for the Economic Development Agency for the Regions of Quebec, CPC):** Madam Speaker, I am pleased to answer the question of the hon. member for Vancouver Quadra. I am glad she asked for an adjournment debate on this subject. Allow me to provide some context for the House.

In 2010, Public Works and Government Services Canada was one of 13 departments that underwent a strategic review, the results of which are reflected in budget 2011.

In accordance with the requirements of the strategic review, all departmental activities were reviewed against established criteria. Included in these criteria were assessments of the federal role, relevance and efficiency of activities. The conclusions and recommendations of PWGSC's strategic review were subject to independent review and validation.



Over a period of several months, the department collected and analyzed information related to all of PWGSC's activities. This information was used to develop proposals based on the government's priorities and to meet the savings targets identified for PWGSC under three main themes: eliminating duplication and overlap across programs and services; enhancing efficiency of our operations through innovation and continuous improvement; focusing on our core mandate and leveraging the expertise of the private sector.

To this end, PWGSC put forward proposals on the basis of these criteria and themes, with a view to achieving savings of \$98.6 million by 2013-14, as well as further savings in future years.

These were approved by the minister and the Treasury Board and were included in budget 2011.

I also want to inform the member opposite that throughout this entire process, PWGSC fully considered the impact of its proposals on businesses and regional operations, and will also follow a phased approach in implementing these proposals.

Furthermore, PWGSC's strategic review proposals also fully considered the impact on human resources.

Across PWGSC, 687 positions will be eliminated, including 556 in the national capital region and 131 in the regions over the next three years. We are a department of over 14,000 employees.

Given our rate of attrition and the departure of approximately 1,000 employees each year, we anticipate minimal loss of employment.

The department has a comprehensive human resources management strategy in place to care for all affected employees, including all employees of Audit Services Canada.

I would like to respond to the hon. member for Vancouver Quadra's concern about Audit Services Canada.

After significant analysis and due consideration, the decision was made to wind down the operations of Audit Services Canada, which provides optional audit services to other government departments and agencies on a cost-for-fee basis.

The wind-down of Audit Services Canada will not detract from the core capability of the government to conduct internal audits, including PWGSC's internal audit capacity.

PWGSC's internal audit and evaluation group is completely separate from Audit Services Canada, and over the last five years, the number of employees within this group has increased significantly.

PWGSC will continue to provide strong oversight on all of its programs and activities. PWGSC, along with all government organizations, has augmented its internal audit and evaluation capacity in recent years.

### *Adjournment Proceedings*

Indeed, PWGSC's internal audit and evaluation function has received the highest possible assessment for the last two years by the Treasury Board Secretariat.

[*English*]

**Ms. Joyce Murray:** Madam Speaker, first, the government member talks about relevance and efficiencies in spending decisions. That is completely laughable when \$50 million of money authorized for border infrastructure was syphoned off by the President of the Treasury Board to spend on irrelevant and inefficient vanity projects in his own riding.

Second, the decision to eliminate auditing jobs at Public Works is very interesting considering that department's close connection to a political contracting scandal that tied the former minister of public works under the Conservative government with the contractors that received massive contracts to restore the West Block, and were implicated in fundraising for that minister.

The government's track record on wasting money is pathetic and then to fire the very auditors that could shed light on—

• (1840)

**The Deputy Speaker:** The hon. parliamentary secretary.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Jacques Gourde:** Madam Speaker, I would like to reiterate the following points.

Audit Services Canada is provided as an optional service for government departments that wish to acquire private sector audit expertise.

The services that Audit Services Canada provide are completely optional and provided on a fee-for-service basis, which is similar to the private sector. Many departments already acquire supplemental audit services directly from the private sector instead of using Audit Services Canada. PWGSC's internal audit group is completely separate from Audit Services Canada. The winding-down of Audit Services Canada will not affect PWGSC's internal audit and evaluation capability.

PWGSC received the highest possible rating of its internal audit and evaluation capability through an independent assessment in 2010-11 conducted by the Treasury Board Secretariat. PWGSC also received the highest possible rating—generally by professional standards—by a third party external validation in 2009 for its internal audit function.

**The Deputy Speaker:** The motion to adjourn the House is now deemed to have been adopted. Accordingly, this House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 10 a.m., pursuant to Standing Order 24(1).

(The House adjourned at 6:42 p.m.)





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HOUSE OF COMMONS  
CHAMBRE DES COMMUNES  
CANADA

# House of Commons Debates

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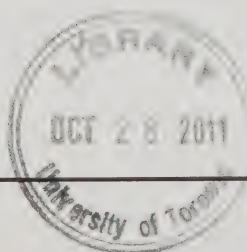
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OFFICIAL REPORT  
(HANSARD)

Thursday, October 6, 2011

Speaker: The Honourable Andrew Scheer



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(Table of Contents appears at back of this issue.)



# HOUSE OF COMMONS

Thursday, October 6, 2011

The House met at 10 a.m.

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*Prayers*

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## ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

● (1005)

[English]

### CHINESE CANADIAN HISTORY

**Mr. Chungsen Leung (Parliamentary Secretary for Multiculturalism, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 32(2), I have the honour to table, in both official languages, a brief chronology of 160 years of the Chinese Canadian history from segregation to integration.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

### IMPROVING TRADE WITHIN CANADA ACT

**Hon. Christian Paradis (Minister of Industry and Minister of State (Agriculture), CPC)** moved for leave to introduce Bill C-14, An Act to amend the Agreement on Internal Trade Implementation Act and the Crown Liability and Proceedings Act.

(Motions deemed adopted, bill read the first time and printed)

\* \* \*

[English]

### INCO LIMITED ACQUISITION ACT

**Mr. Claude Gravelle (Nickel Belt, NDP)** moved for leave to introduce Bill C-328, An Act respecting the acquisition of Inco Limited by CVRD Canada Inc.

He said: Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to introduce a private member's bill entitled, "An Act respecting the acquisition of Inco Limited by CVRD Canada Inc.

Vale, formerly CVRD, acquired Canada-owned mining company Inco in October 2006. I have made requests of the Minister of Industry, Vale Inco, the House of Commons and through the Access to Information Act to have the details of the agreement made public and have been repeatedly denied.

I, therefore, present this legislation which would release the details of the Vale Inco agreement, along with any correspondence between the minister and the company and its enforcement.

(Motions deemed adopted, bill read the first time and printed)

\* \* \*

### FALCONBRIDGE LIMITED ACQUISITION ACT

**Mr. Claude Gravelle (Nickel Belt, NDP)** moved for leave to introduce Bill C-329, An Act respecting the acquisition of Falconbridge Limited by Xstrata PLC.

He said: Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure to introduce a private member's bill respecting the acquisition of Falconbridge Limited by Xstrata PLC.

Xstrata acquired Canadian mining company Falconbridge in July 2006. In the House of Commons, I asked the Minister of Industry to make the agreements in question public and I also asked the government under the Access to Information Act, but have, so far, received no response.

I am, therefore, introducing this bill which would require the Government of Canada to publish all written undertakings given in the right of Canada under the Investment Canada Act in respect to the acquisition of Falconbridge. The bill also would require the publication of all correspondence exchanged between the minister and the company about enforcement of this agreement.

(Motions deemed adopted, bill read the first time and printed)

\* \* \*

### PETITIONS

#### FOREIGN AFFAIRS

**Hon. Geoff Regan (Halifax West, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I stand today to present a petition on behalf of over 1,000 Nova Scotians who are concerned about the situation of Mr. Philip Halliday, a Canadian citizen who has been incarcerated in a Spanish prison since December 21, 2009, over 18 months, without a trial date set.

The petitioners call upon the House of Commons to defend the rights of Philip Mason Halliday and take action to intervene on his behalf with the Spanish authorities. They call upon the Government of Canada to use diplomatic channels to ensure Mr. Halliday receives a fair and speedy trial or immediate release based upon the length of his detention with no trial date and his continued deteriorating health issues.

*Government Orders*

## ASBESTOS

**Mr. Pat Martin (Winnipeg Centre, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to stand today to present a petition signed by thousands of Canadians from all across the country who call upon Parliament to take note that asbestos is the greatest industrial killer that the world has ever known. They point out that more Canadians now die from asbestos than all other occupational and industrial causes combined and yet Canada remains one of the largest producers and exporters of asbestos in the world, spending millions of dollars subsidizing the asbestos industry and blocking international efforts to curb its use.

Therefore, the petitioners call upon the Government of Canada to ban asbestos in all of its forms and institute a just transition program for the asbestos workers and the communities in which they live, to end all government subsidies of asbestos both in Canada and abroad and to stop blocking international health and safety conventions designed to protect workers from asbestos, such as the Rotterdam Convention.

\* \* \*

● (1010)

## QUESTIONS ON THE ORDER PAPER

**Mr. Tom Lukiwski (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I ask that all questions be allowed to stand.

**The Speaker:** Is that agreed?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

## GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[English]

## KEEPING CANADA'S ECONOMY AND JOBS GROWING ACT

BILL C-13—TIME ALLOCATION MOTION

**Hon. Peter Van Loan (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, CPC)** moved:

That, in relation to Bill C-13, An Act to implement certain provisions of the 2011 budget as updated on June 6, 2011 and other measures, not more than three further sitting days shall be allotted to the consideration of the second reading stage of the bill; and

that, 15 minutes before the expiry of the time provided for government orders on the third day allotted to the consideration at second reading stage of the said bill, any proceedings before the House shall be interrupted, if required for the purpose of this order, and, in turn, every question necessary for the disposal of the said stage of the bill shall be put forthwith and successively, without further debate or amendment.

**The Speaker:** Pursuant to Standing Order 67.1 there will now be a 30 minute question period. I invite hon. members who wish to ask questions to stand in their places so the Chair has some idea of the number of members who wish to participate in this question period.

Given the number of people interested, I would encourage members to limit their questions to perhaps about a minute or minute and a half and, as in previous incidents of this, the Chair will give priority to members of the opposition during the question and comment period.

I recognize the hon. member for Outremont.

[Translation]

**Mr. Thomas Mulcair (Outremont, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, a French philosopher once said that while once is philosophy, twice is perversion. That is what we have here today with the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, who is demonstrating the majority Conservative government's utter contempt for Parliament and our democratic institutions.

We know that 39% of the Canadians who voted in the last election chose the Conservatives. That was 39% of 60% of the eligible voters, because 40% of the voters stayed home. This means that they were elected by less than 25% of eligible Canadians. We have very clear rules, and that is one reason why, since its creation, Canada has always enjoyed peace, order and good government. We must all defend our democratic institutions.

But instead of defending our democratic institutions, the government is ignoring them and treating them with contempt. It is telling us that since we made the mistake of giving them a majority, it will now do whatever it wants, gagging us and bringing out the guillotine every time we start to debate a bill. According to the Conservatives, no one has the right to question their priorities or to ask any questions about their bills.

Madam Speaker, you are here to enforce the regulations that we have set for ourselves, and I urge you to take note of the Conservative government's latest affront to Canadian democracy and to defend the rights of parliamentarians to deliberately, carefully and meticulously debate bills. That is why we were elected. This shows contempt not only for Parliament, but also for the voters of the Canadian electorate.

[English]

**Hon. Peter Van Loan:** Madam Speaker, I do not think, in my lifetime, that there has been a budget that has received as much debate as this one. The budget was introduced in the previous Parliament and it was rejected by the opposition. We had an election and the main platform on which we ran was essentially the budget. After we won a majority government, confidence from Canadian voters, that budget was reintroduced in virtually the identical form and that budget was adopted by this House and is now being implemented through this budget implementation bill.

The amount of debate that has happened and the consultation with the public is unprecedented for this type of a bill. On top of that, we are proposing for this debate an entire four days of debate, which is more time than has typically happened, on average, for any budget implementation bill in the past 20 years. For all the budget implementation bills the average is certainly less than four days.

Therefore, we have ample opportunity to debate in this House following an unprecedented amount of public debate on this matter.



*Government Orders*

● (1015)

**Mr. Marc Garneau (Westmount—Ville-Marie, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, it is unfortunate that we are beginning to see a trend here with government bills with the new majority government. Unfortunately, it will stifle the proper debates that need to happen.

I would like to draw attention to the fact that one of the big shortcomings in this budget implementation plan, Bill C-13, is the fact that, once again, the government is discriminating against those who are poor, those who have less than the average Canadian. I will give an example. It has to do with the fact that some of the tax measures that the government talks about are non-refundable. This is something that perhaps escapes many Canadians but, unfortunately, it has a very real effect on those who are poor in this country.

I will talk about the example of the volunteer firemen who will have the opportunity to have a non-refundable tax credit. We, in the Liberal Party, gave a refundable tax credit. However, the reality is that if they are well-off as volunteer firemen, they will be able to take full advantage of that tax credit against their imposable tax. If they are not, they will not have that opportunity to take advantage of it. That means again that it is the poor in this country who will be discriminated again, and we need to talk about that.

**Hon. Peter Van Loan:** Madam Speaker, this is an important bill to proceed with quickly because it has important measures that would address what I think, and certainly what this government thinks, is the biggest challenge, but apparently not the opposition, and that is jobs and economic growth. We have that in this bill with a proposal for a hiring tax credit for the creation of new jobs by small businesses in Canada. It is very important for job creation. We need that measure in place now.

The opposition members asked for a jobs plan and we have it for them. First, they voted against it the other night and now they want to delay and obstruct it further. That is why we want to move forward with it quickly.

We also want to move forward with additional measures, such as our accelerated capital cost allowance so that businesses can continue to invest and improve productivity to ensure that Canadians stay at the cutting edge of being able to produce and grow to innovate and so that businesses would have the capacity to hire and create jobs and compete successfully.

We are in a context of a global economic downturn and being able to compete successfully globally is critically important for creating jobs here in Canada. That is what a measure like that would do and that is why we want to see that measure put in place without delay.

We have had unprecedented debate, a general election on—

**The Deputy Speaker:** Order, please. Questions and comments. The hon. member for Outremont.

**Mr. Thomas Mulcair:** Madam Speaker, finally, some lucidity on the government side. We are in the middle of a world economic downturn. We are about to live the second Conservative recession since 2008. In three years, we will have lived through two consecutive Conservative recessions. Precisely because the world economic situation is degrading so rapidly, he does not realize the contradiction in his argument.

Last spring's budget no longer pertains in that context. We need vigorous, robust intervention to create jobs, to stimulate the economy and to hold on to what we have. Instead, we are being served these old bromides, doctrinaire Conservative approach. This is Herbert Hoover redux. This is the Conservative approach. That is not what Canada needs right now. We need stimulating expenditures on infrastructure. We need to keep the economy going. We need to create jobs. The situation has changed. That debate has to take place. The Conservatives are shutting down debate on the very subject that they do not want to hear about. It is the impending recession. It is what is over the horizon. They do not want Canadians to know that they are sitting on their hands like usual and they are using last year's remedies for this year's problems. We want to discuss that. Parliament exists to debate these issues. They are shutting down debate. That is what is going on here today.

● (1020)

**Hon. Ted Menzies (Minister of State (Finance), CPC):** Madam Speaker, I am actually quite proud to stand and support this motion that has been put forward. I think we need to put this in perspective. We had a very thorough debate on this budget bill. It comes in two forms, as that hon. member and every member in this House should know. We would have moved this forward more quickly if we had not been forced into an election.

However, we had a debate, a debate that was very fulsome, probably the best debate that one could ever have, and that was with all Canadians for 37 days in the election campaign.

We tabled this budget on March 22. We had 37 days of fulsome debate. This is great debate in here, and there will be more debate on the economy as we move forward, but Canadians have spoken and they have spoken loudly by giving our government a strong and stable mandate and showing support for the budget that we tabled.

**Ms. Chris Charlton (Hamilton Mountain, NDP):** Madam Speaker, this is completely mind-boggling to me. The government says that it had the economic action plan and that it went to the people with it, but things have changed. Even the Minister of Finance recognizes that things have changed because he was in the media as late as yesterday saying that the government needed to be flexible and pragmatic. If we want to be flexible and pragmatic in addressing the recent economic downturn, then we need to take another look at what the government proposed last spring when the economic situation was entirely different.

### Government Orders

We need to take the Minister of Finance at his word. It is not just the New Democrats who are saying that the government's approach is flawed and that we need to revisit it. I will read a list of people. Sherry Cooper, the chief economist at BMO Nesbitt Burns; TD Economics; Scotiabank; the Conference Board of Canada; the International Monetary Fund; and the Bank of Canada. Even the Department of Finance itself recognizes that we need to do things differently. The Toronto Board of Trade also thinks we are now in a unique situation where we need to do things differently.

We started debate on this bill only yesterday and today the government is bringing a motion to shut down the debate. People in Canada need to be heard on this issue. It affects hard-working Canadians and seniors whose retirement savings are once again going up in smoke. The Minister of Finance agrees that we should be flexible and pragmatic, so let us bring the debate to the floor of the chamber. That is what Parliament is for and that is why we will be opposing this motion.

**Hon. Ted Menzies:** Madam Speaker, it is no surprise that the New Democrats will be opposing this motion to move forward with the continuation of Canada's economic action plan, a plan for jobs and growth, because they have voted against every other phase of it.

The New Democrats stand in the House now and say that we need to stimulate the economy. When we put forward a budget to stimulate the economy, they voted against it. They voted against every phase of both budget implementation acts 1 and 2 of the 2010 budget and, in fact, if I recall correctly, in 2009 as well when we put forward the first phase of our economic action plan that has worked. Why is it working? It is working because 600,000 Canadians are working. That is more jobs than we lost. We gained more output than we lost. They want to belabour this legislation that would actually provide more stimulus to the Canadian economy and more tax credits to families that need it.

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, I find it most interesting that the government House leader introduces a motion in the House and then kind of turns his back to the whole debate on the issue and will not even stand up to answer specific questions.

It is very noteworthy that we recognize why it is we are here. We are here to hold government to account. We have had major bills introduced in the last few weeks. In this case, just yesterday the government introduced a bill and yesterday the minister said that he would be bringing in time allocation. Bill C-10, a crime bill, would do nothing in terms of preventing crimes from taking place and yet we are spending hundreds of millions of dollars. Bill C-4 would victimize refugees. The government put time allocation on these major bills.

Just so members across the way can say that they have actually seen the bill, this is the bill that we are supposed to be talking about. The government House leader and the Prime Minister see it fit to limit the debate on substantial pieces of legislation.

I would look to the government House leader to stand in his place and tell Canadians how he justifies bringing in this type of legislation and then saying, on the day it is introduced, that there will be only three days to debate it, not to mention the other bills that he

• (1025)

**The Deputy Speaker:** Order, please. The hon. Minister of State for Finance.

**Hon. Ted Menzies:** Madam Speaker, no matter how loud the hon. member yells, it does not make any more sense. I could stand here for 10 minutes and recite all of the closure bills that the former Liberal government put forward in the House.

**An hon. member:** Anything I did you can do, too.

**Hon. Ted Menzies:** The argument just put forward by that hon. member is very hollow.

I would go back to what I referred to in my first comments—

**Hon. John McKay:** We did it. Therefore, you do it.

**Hon. Ted Menzies:** —if that hon. member would care to close his mouth long enough to listen. There is a reason that God gave us one mouth and two ears.

Thank you, Madam Speaker, for allowing me to continue while he is belabouring the points over there.

I want to emphasize the fact—

**Some hon. members:** Oh, oh!

**The Deputy Speaker:** I would ask for a little order in the House.

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux:** Madam Speaker, *Beauchesne's* is clear when it states that all members are hon. members.

I am sitting in my chair trying to listen to the response that the minister is attempting to give in place of the government House leader when I posed the question to the government House leader. I was actually quiet. He is making an accusation that I should be quiet when I was quiet and was listening to the member.

If the member was actually paying attention in terms of who was listening and who was not, he should not have made those comments.

**Some hon. members:** Oh, oh!

**The Deputy Speaker:** Order, please. I would ask the hon. member to come to order. I believe there was considerable disorder in the House and I ask for respect from all members while one member is speaking. It is very difficult to hear answers and questions.

I would ask the hon. minister to conclude.

**Hon. Ted Menzies:** Madam Speaker, I beg your forgiveness. I was hearing voices from that side but I do pay attention to you, Madam Speaker.

We need to focus on what is important here, Canadians. Who did we talk to for 37 days during the election campaign? I spoke to thousands of my constituents, as did every member in this House. They actually understood what was in this bill. They supported what was in this bill and they gave us a majority mandate to move forward with this budget.



*Government Orders*

**Mr. Nathan Cullen (Skeena—Bulkley Valley, NDP):** Madam Speaker, I find it ironic that the member across the way viewed the last election as the Conservative government's effort to listen to Canadians when they denied Canadians the ability to ask the leader of the Conservative Party any questions throughout the course of that entire election period. That constitutes listening on their behalf. That does not work for us in the New Democratic Party. We believe that when we say we are going to listen, we actually listen.

The concern with this is that the government is falling in love with the hammer of closure. There is no more draconian measure that a government can use. The way that the government justifies this is by saying that the Liberals used to do it when they were in government. It is as if the standard that the government is setting itself by is how the Liberals conducted themselves when they had majority governments.

This is dangerous for the government and it is certainly dangerous for this place and for our democracy. The Conservatives are taking a convenient but incorrect lesson from the last election. They are taking a lesson that this majority gave them the power to shut down debate and, more dangerously, not change their ideology or opinion or legislation when the circumstances have changed underneath them.

This is most dangerous for our economy and our country. I plead with the government that a day of debate over our economy is not enough. The Conservatives did not have it during the election, they did not allow Canadians in the door and now is the time. This is what this place is constructed for and what it is meant for.

We need to allow this place to do its work and allow the elected members of this place to our work. The debate should not be shut down. You need to get out of the ideological trap you have set for yourselves and get to work on putting people back to work.

• (1030)

**The Deputy Speaker:** I would remind all hon. members to direct their comments and questions to the Chair. The hon. Minister of State for Finance.

**Hon. Ted Menzies:** Madam Speaker, I listened to my hon. colleague's questions and comments about how important it is that we listen to Canadians. We did listen to Canadians. We listened to Canadians' reaction to what was in the budget that was first tabled on March 22, and then again in June, promoting job creation and economic growth through a temporary hiring credit for small business.

Resoundingly, across the country, businesses said that, yes, that would help them and that it would help them to stimulate jobs. That is what Canadians said to us and that is why we are moving forward with this budget implementation act, to ensure we can get this through so more jobs can be created.

[Translation]

**Mr. Alexandre Boulerice (Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie, NDP):** Madam Speaker, I would like to take this opportunity to point out that the minister scolded us a few minutes ago for voting against infrastructure investments. But that should not surprise them. We know this government has a habit of bending the rules, diverting funds and using infrastructure programs to shower gifts upon their

friends, as the member for Parry Sound—Muskoka has done. It is quite disturbing.

Yesterday, the Auditor General said, yet again, that the rules had been broken. We need a responsible, accountable, transparent government. But that is not what we are getting with the Conservatives. The official opposition, the NDP, is asking for more time to study the budget implementation. This budget makes poor choices, is full of holes, has the wrong priorities and gives billions of dollars in tax cuts to banks and big oil, which have no need for them. This budget does not fulfill any of the real needs of the people. It ignores poverty and social housing. It makes no mention of the environment, research and development or the future. We need more time because we do not want to leave any stone unturned. We want to ask the government all the right questions.

[English]

**Hon. Ted Menzies:** Madam Speaker, what I think I heard in that rather rambling question was what we were doing to help Canadians.

I will talk about one of the other items in this legislation that should be accepted and supported by all members in the House, which is expanding tax support for clean energy generation. In fact, we are encouraging green investments. We hear all across this country, whether it is in Atlantic Canada, here in Ontario or in the west, industries asking for some support to green up their industries, to make their industries more environmentally friendly. I hear this from the coal-fired generation plants and from the oil sector in my neighbourhood.

We have put in the legislation a way for the tax system to encourage that. I would implore all hon. members to support these tax initiatives.

**Mr. Garry Breitkreuz (Yorkton—Melville, CPC):** Madam Speaker, I would ask the minister to briefly comment on what the bill does for families. I have a family and I represent many families, as I am sure every member in the House does. Would he make some observations as to why the passage of this legislation in a timely manner is so important?

I also want to make an observation before he answers that. I have been in the House for quite some time and I have never, ever seen such a stark contrast between the opposition and the government as I have now. The proposal for large, big spending programs; going further into debt, something the opposition should not be proud of; driving our deficits even higher and going further into debt. How does that affect families?

On this side, we like to keep government spending down. We want to ensure taxes remain low. How does that boost the economy? How does that help families? There are some key principles at stake and maybe the member could comment on these.

• (1035)

**Hon. Ted Menzies:** Madam Speaker, I thank my friend from Saskatchewan, who has been a very strong supporter of family values and helping families. That is why we continue on with some of the programs we started in budget 2010 and continued on into budget 2011.

*Government Orders*

The family caregiver tax credit would assist caregivers of all types of infirm dependent family members. This is a serious issue with many families who are caring for infirm family members. We all know that infirm family members certainly get the most love and attention at home, but the cost may be prohibitive. Therefore, we put in a tax credit for those people who wish to keep their infirm relatives at home. That is important for families.

**Hon. Geoff Regan (Halifax West, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, I note that the government tabled the notice of time allocation motion on the same day that it tabled the bill. In other words, it tabled the bill, which is an inch or so thick and a very complicated document, for us to consider in the House of Commons, and decided at the same time that there had been enough debate. It tabled this notice of motion on the same day to cut off debate.

Government members talk about the fact that they won the election and received a majority government with a little under 40% of the vote, so they now have four years to govern. What is not clear to me is why they are not open to having a few days or even a few weeks of debate on the hundreds of pages in the bill before it inevitably will pass.

Why is the government so opposed to having a democratic process in the House?

**Hon. Ted Menzies:** Madam Speaker, I am not going to dwell on this. The important thing is that we have had a debate and a discussion with Canadians.

We had a debate when the budget was tabled on June 6 and finally passed on June 16. There was debate during the parliamentary committee process when witnesses were brought to committee to talk about some of the things that are important to their industries and their sectors. The not-for-profit industry supports many of the pieces in the legislation and spoke at committee about what was positive. They spoke about the fact that we need to get this bill passed.

We have debated this. It has been debated on the floor before. It is not as if the budget was just tabled. This is the budget implementation act, part two.

We have had the debate. Everyone has read the bill. It is time that we passed it and moved on to provide this good news to Canadians.

**Mr. Dennis Bevington (Western Arctic, NDP):** Madam Speaker, the Conservatives' approach here is that there have not been any changes to the budget and that we really have debated it fully, so there is no requirement to spend time on it. That approach flies in the face of what is happening with the economy.

I will refer to chapter 5 of the low-tax plan for jobs and growth. When we look at the plan for a balanced budget, we see that the government has charts that show what happens when we have a 1% decline in our GDP. They show a \$3 billion to \$4 billion increase in our deficit, and that is exactly what has happened. Many factors have changed in the economy. Those changes must change the government's plans, because it is falling behind on its plans.

We need to talk about this. We need to understand where our economy is going in relation to the budget that came out last March.

• (1040)

**Hon. Ted Menzies:** Madam Speaker, the matter before us today is simply about moving forward with a plan that has been accepted. It was accepted by Canadians. It was actually accepted by the House of Commons on June 16 to move forward. We are now implementing the measures that were approved through the House.

This is second reading. Everyone here is well aware of that. When the bill passes through the House, it will go to committee stage for a full debate there. The other processes will follow that. There will be ample debate after the four days that we have put forward.

[Translation]

**Mr. André Bellavance (Richmond—Arthabaska, BQ):** Madam Speaker, democracy is being denied as a direct result of this gag order.

This should not come as a surprise to anyone here. When the Conservatives had a minority, beginning in 2006, a former adviser to the Prime Minister, Tom Flanagan, told the Conservatives to be patient, because once they had a majority, they could bulldoze over everything and do whatever they like. And that is exactly what they are doing.

With this bill, Quebecers would have liked to talk about a Canada-wide securities commission. They would have liked to talk about a government that is once again pillaging the employment insurance fund without offering anything for unemployed workers. They would have also liked to talk about the government's decision to cut public funding of political parties.

So I would like to ask the government what it is so afraid of that would make it abuse democracy in this manner and prevent parliamentarians from doing their jobs and asking questions on behalf of Quebecers.

[English]

**Hon. Ted Menzies:** Madam Speaker, I have heard my hon. colleague stand in the House and ask questions specifically about the Quebec wage earners who have been caught in one of the most unfortunate situations that any employee can be caught in, which is when their employer goes into receivership.

I am sure he has read the portion of the budget in which we propose to implement a measure called the wage earner protection program. It will help protect those individuals. Going forward, it will help protect employees who work for companies like those in his riding. They will be protected during unfortunate incidents of employers going into bankruptcy or receivership.

We think it is very important for those employees to have this protection and to have it as soon as we can get it through the House.

**The Deputy Speaker:** It is my duty to interrupt the proceedings at this time and put forthwith the question on the motion now before the House.

[Translation]

The question is on the motion. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.



Some hon. members: No.

The Deputy Speaker: All those in favour of the motion will please say yea.

Some hon. members: Yea.

The Deputy Speaker: All those opposed will please say nay.

Some hon. members: Nay.

The Deputy Speaker: In my opinion the yeas have it.

And five or more members having risen:

The Deputy Speaker: Call in the members.

● (1125)

(The House divided on the motion, which was agreed to on the following division:)

(Division No. 38)	
YEAS	
Members	
Ablonczy	Adams
Aglukkaq	Albas
Albrecht	Alexander
Allen (Tobique—Mactaquac)	Allison
Ambler	Ambrose
Anders	Anderson
Armstrong	Ashfield
Aspin	Baird
Bateman	Bernier
Bezan	Blaney
Block	Boughen
Braid	Breitkreuz
Brown (Leeds—Grenville)	Brown (Newmarket—Aurora)
Brown (Barrie)	Bruinooge
Butt	Calandra
Calkins	Cannan
Carmichael	Carrie
Chisu	Chong
Clarke	Clement
Daniel	Davidson
Dechert	Del Mastro
Devolin	Dreeshen
Duncan (Vancouver Island North)	Dykstra
Fantino	Fast
Findlay (Delta—Richmond East)	Finley (Haldimand—Norfolk)
Fletcher	Galipeau
Gallant	Gill
Goguen	Goldring
Goodyear	Gosal
Gourde	Grewal
Harper	Harris (Cariboo—Prince George)
Hawn	Hayes
Hiebert	Hillyer
Hoepfner	Holder
James	Kamp (Pitt Meadows—Maple Ridge—Mission)
Keddy (South Shore—St. Margaret's)	Kenney (Calgary Southeast)
Kent	Kerr
Komarnicki	Kramp (Prince Edward—Hastings)
Lake	Lauzon
Leaf	Lemieux
Leung	Lizon
Lobb	Lukiwski
Lunney	MacKenzie
Mayes	McColeman
Menegakis	Menzies
Merrifield	Miller
Moore (Port Moody—Westwood—Port Coquitlam)	
Nicholson	
Norlock	O'Connor
O'Neill Gordon	Obhrai
Oda	Opitz
Paradis	Payne
Penashue	Poilievre

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Preston	Raitt
Rathgeber	Reid
Rempel	Richards
Richardson	Rickford
Ritz	Schellenberger
Seeback	Shea
Shipley	Shory
Smith	Sopuck
Sorenson	Stanton
Storseth	Strahl
Sweet	Tilson
Toct	Toews
Trost	Trottier
Truppe	Tweed
Uppal	Valcourt
Van Loan	Vellacott
Wallace	Warawa
Warkentin	Watson
Weston (West Vancouver—Sunshine Coast—Sea to Sky Country)	
Weston (Saint John)	
Wilks	Williamson
Wong	Woodworth
Yelich	Young (Oakville)
Young (Vancouver South)	Zimmer — 150

NAYS	
Members	
Andrews	Ashton
Atamanenko	Aubin
Ayala	Bélanger
Bellavance	Benskin
Bevington	Blanchette
Blanchette-Lamothe	Boivin
Borg	Boulerice
Boutin-Sweet	Brahmi
Brosseau	Byrne
Caron	Casey
Charlton	Chicoine
Chisholm	Choquette
Chow	Coderre
Comartin	Côté
Cotler	Crowder
Cullen	Cuzner
Davies (Vancouver Kingsway)	Davies (Vancouver East)
Day	Dewar
Dion	Dionne Labelle
Donnelly	Doré Lefebvre
Dubé	Duncan (Etobicoke North)
Duncan (Edmonton—Strathcona)	Dussault
Easter	Eyking
Foote	Freeman
Garneau	Garrison
Genest	Genest-Jourdain
Goodale	Grogulé
Hassainia	Jacob
Julian	Karygiannis
Kellway	Lamoureux
Lapointe	Larose
Latendresse	Laverdière
LeBlanc (Beauséjour)	LeBlanc (LaSalle—Émard)
Leslie	Liu
MacAulay	Martin
Mathysen	McKay (Scarborough—Guildwood)
Michaud	Moore (Abitibi—Témiscamingue)
Morin (Chicoutimi—Le Fjord)	Morin (Notre-Dame-de-Grâce—Lachine)
Morin (Laurentides—Labelle)	Morin (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot)
Mulcair	Murray
Nantel	Nicholls
Nunez-Melo	Papillon
Patry	Pécllet
Perreault	Pilon
Quach	Rafferty
Ravignat	Raynault
Regan	Saganash
Sandhu	Savoie
Simms (Bonavista—Gander—Grand Falls—Windor)	
Sims (Newton—North Delta)	
Sitsabaiesan	St-Denis
Stewart	Stoffer
Toone	Tremblay
Trudeau	Turncl
Valeriote — 107	

*Government Orders*

## PAIRED

Nil

**The Speaker:** I declare the motion carried.

I wish to inform the House that because of the debate on the time allocation motion, Government Orders will be extended by 30 minutes.

\* \* \*

# KEEPING CANADA'S ECONOMY AND JOBS GROWING ACT

The House resumed from October 5 consideration of the motion that Bill C-13, An Act to implement certain provisions of the 2011 budget as updated on June 6, 2011 and other measures, be read the second time and referred to a committee.

**The Speaker:** The hon. member for Rivière-du-Nord has three minutes left for questions and comments.

The hon. member for Winnipeg Centre.

[English]

**Mr. Pat Martin (Winnipeg Centre, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, did the member, when elected to the House of Commons, contemplate that there would be an excessive and almost compulsive use of closure to shut down debate on virtually every issue brought forward in the House? The general public expects that all legislation put before the House will be given the due diligence of vigorous debate to test its merits before it is rammed down the throats of Canadians.

[Translation]

**Mr. Pierre Dionne Labelle (Rivière-du-Nord, NDP):** Madam Speaker, to answer my colleague's question truthfully, I would say that I did expect that a bit. I know the mentality of the people across the way and their desire to quickly pass a pile of legislation that pushes Canada further and further to the right, toward selfishness and the absence of real social protections. I did indeed expect shortened debates and closure motions and so forth.

Before closing, I would like to point out that Moody's gave Canada a triple-A rating. I know that somewhere, the big bankers are drinking champagne. They are happy to come invest in Canada. I, myself, am giving Canada a triple-E rating when it comes to fighting poverty. Last year, the number of people who turn to food banks rose by 9%. I know that the ladies and gentlemen across the way are not very familiar with food banks. They are closer to the banks than to the people who are suffering.

This statistic tops the list of the greatest indicators of social solidarity. When we see an increase in the number of people using food banks in a country that brags that it is moving ahead, economically speaking, and has come out of the recession, I think there is a disconnect. We are being led by a government that has no concern for the realities of everyday people or for poverty in Canada, and that makes me very sad. In this 176-page budget, there is no measure to correct this situation, and that is shameful.

• (1130)

[English]

**Ms. Chris Charlton (Hamilton Mountain, NDP):** Madam Speaker, I am delighted to speak to Bill C-13 which the

Conservatives have dubbed the "Keeping Canada's Economy and Jobs Growing Act".

That would be an appropriate title if we had actually been experiencing growth in employment and the economy, but it is impossible to keep something that we never had in the first place. Let us look at the facts.

Canada has a weak job market. The current job market is still weaker than it was before the crisis in October 2008.

There is a continuing recession in the job market, with unemployment far above what it was before the last recession and job creation well below what is needed just to keep employment steady.

Economic growth is stagnant. Economists across the board have slashed their projections for Canada's economic growth. The Conservative budget is based on growth projections which no longer appear viable.

There is ongoing uncertainty regarding Canadians' retirement savings.

Household debt is skyrocketing. Canadian household debt levels have hit all time record levels of 150%.

There is the failure of our primary export markets. The International Monetary Fund projects that Canada's balance of payments deficit as a percentage of GDP is on its way to becoming one of the worst among advanced economies. It is worse than that of the United States and soon to be worse than that of Italy and Spain. The IMF predicts that our current account deficit will reach almost 4% of GDP by 2012.

As well, there is a lack of adequate private investment in Canada.

Urgent action is required on Canadians' top priorities, namely health care, jobs, pensions and helping seniors in need.

Earlier this week the Conservatives voted in favour of the NDP's economic action plan. It is time for them to live up to that commitment by doing more than talking the talk. They need to walk the talk. They need to follow through on their vote by coming forward with a plan for real and decisive action.

As I have been afforded only 10 minutes to participate in today's debate, I will only be able to highlight a few of the areas that are of critical concern to voters in my riding of Hamilton Mountain.

Members who listened to their constituents in last May's election and since cannot ignore the fact that health care continues to be a primary concern for Canadians. They are absolutely right to be concerned.

Five million Canadians do not have a regular family doctor. Of those Canadians who do not have a doctor, 73% are dependent on hospital emergency rooms or walk-in clinics for the front-line medical care their families rely on.

Canada ranks 26th of 30 industrial countries in terms of doctors per capita. In 2008, the Canadian Medical Association found that Canada would need an additional 26,000 doctors to meet the OECD average doctor-to-population ratio.



*Government Orders*

If no action is taken on training, there will also be a shortage of 60,000 registered nurses just 10 years down the road. In spite of this huge shortage of health professionals, the Conservatives do not plan to hire any new doctors or nurses. Rather, they will only move health professionals from urban to rural areas.

How does that help a city like Hamilton? We are experiencing a profound shortage of health care professionals. Instead of addressing that crisis, the Conservatives are adding insult to injury. They are luring doctors and nurses away from urban centres by offering loan forgiveness only to those who are willing to abandon cities and work in rural areas. That is robbing Peter to pay Paul. Canadians deserve better.

That is not a partisan observation; the Canadian Medical Association agrees. It warned:

If we do not act soon, an aging medical profession combined with an aging population will create a "perfect storm" with respect to our supply of physicians.

It is not only the health care system that is being put at risk by the Conservative government's inaction, Canada's economy is also being battered. The Conservatives simply shrug their shoulders and tell Canadians to take solace in the fact that we are better off than countries like Greece.

That is an insult. It is an insult to the hard-working Canadians who lost their jobs in the last recession through no fault of their own.

It is time to act decisively on job creation so that the middle-class citizens who built our country can finally get back on their feet.

Let me underscore the urgency for such action. The official unemployment figure is close to 1.4 million Canadians. If we include those who are discouraged or underemployed, that number would be closer to two million.

• (1135)

Unemployment is up to 7.3% and the proportion of part-time workers and involuntary part-time workers has risen rapidly. Full-time, permanent, family supporting jobs remain very difficult to find in many areas across the country. The real unemployment rate, counting labour force dropouts and involuntary part-time workers, was 11.1% in July, up from 9.4% in July 2008.

The government's claim to have created 600,000 net new jobs is also a sad distortion of the truth. We have seen the addition of barely 200,000 new jobs since the pre-recessionary employment high point in May 2008. However, the labour force has grown by 450,000 since then. So, those new jobs fall 250,000 short of the number needed just to hold employment steady.

Perhaps the most staggering figure of all is that today's lower employment rate represents lost wages alone of more than \$20 million, and that is to say nothing of the economic stimulus and tax revenues that go with them.

In light of these realities, the lack of action on job creation is not just disappointing, it is completely unacceptable.

The Conservatives often liken government to a business. However, there are few businesses that would overlook the opportunities facing the government: plenty of available skilled labour; a desperate need for infrastructure across the country;

infrastructure that would pay handsome returns; and capital available at almost record low rates. A good businessperson, in such circumstances, would be investing like crazy. But not the government. It does not know a good deal when it sees one.

Despite Canada's shaky economic recovery, the Conservatives want to cut off all stimulus and cut tens of billions out of our economy. Radical spending cuts, even before the private sector is prepared to start investing again, hurt Canadian families and communities.

It is not just New Democrats who are pointing out the folly of this approach. The government's own finance department recognizes that infrastructure investment has more than five times the economic impact of corporate income tax cuts. It published this fact in the appendix of budget 2009.

The Toronto Board of Trade emphasized that a strong infrastructure foundation is a top priority in ensuring economic competitiveness now and into the future.

Glen Hodgson from the Conference Board of Canada also agrees. He told the finance committee this week that now is not the time for government spending cuts. Instead, he emphasized that the government must be willing to be flexible in its approach. He also emphasized, repeatedly, that tax expenditures, including the Prime Minister's ineffective and costly corporate tax cuts, ought to be included in any review of government spending.

Even the Governor of the Bank of Canada is on record saying that the government can help with strategic investments.

But perhaps Sherry Cooper, the Chief Economist of BMO Nesbitt Burns, said it best. She wrote on Monday:

The misplaced belief that the road to economic prosperity is paved by near-term fiscal tightening, as espoused by our own Prime Minister and British Prime Minister David Cameron last week, shows we have learned nothing from Herbert Hoover's response to the Great Depression.

Those who do not learn from history are doomed to repeat it.

I cannot sit idly by and let the government continue on with its do nothing approach while people in my community are suffering the consequences. I am proud to fight for the hard-working families and seniors in Hamilton Mountain, and I will not stop until that job is done.

**Mr. Paul Calandra (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Canadian Heritage, CPC):** Madam Speaker, it was a very difficult speech to try to sit through because there were so many things that were actually wrong in that speech.

*Government Orders*

This is a member of a party that talks about targeting tax cuts, but when we bring them in, its members actually vote against them. They talk about infrastructure, but when we brought infrastructure in, they did not actually like it, so they voted against it. Sometimes they are difficult. They do not want to see deficits, but they want us to spend more money. They are all over the place.

They have absolutely no plan, no understanding of how we can get Canadians back to work. They are upset with the fact that some 600,000 Canadians are working who were not working before. They are upset with the fact that this government has one of the best economic records in the entire world, but what they want to do is continue to talk down the successes of the Canadian economy, the successes of this government.

The reality is that what they are, in essence, is a bunch of ideological lightweights when it comes to the economy who have absolutely no plan, no understanding of what it is that puts Canadians back to work.

I wonder if the hon. member would just simply admit that they absolutely have no plan, no ideas, no understanding how the economy works, and just simply pass this budget because it is the right thing to do for Canadians. It is the right thing to do for the Canadian economy and we cannot delay it any longer.

• (1140)

**Ms. Chris Charlton:** Madam Speaker, it is highly ironic that the member would call us ideological when his party is the most ideological party we have seen in the House of Commons for decades.

I love the fact that he is espousing the lines that we have heard from the Conservatives since before the last election frankly, about what it takes to keep our economy on track. I wonder if he actually listened to his own Minister of Finance, who just yesterday said that in light of the current economic circumstances, we need to be pragmatic and we need to be flexible. Perhaps the Minister of Finance might want to talk to his colleague and explain to him that economic circumstances really have changed and we are on the cusp of another worldwide economic downturn.

The member went on to suggest that we voted against measures like infrastructure spending. Might I remind the member what happened to that infrastructure spending. Money that was supposed to be spent on border security to the tune of \$50 million did not end up anywhere near Canadian borders. It ended up being spent on gazebos and on ice rinks in the riding of the member for Parry Sound—Muskoka. The Auditor General has said there is absolutely no accounting for that money.

Yes, we vote against unaccountable, irresponsible infrastructure spending, but I will stand up for infrastructure spending that supports jobs in my community.

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, the member made reference to issues that have come out of her constituency. I want to reflect on one of the issues that came out in my constituency and that is the plight of our seniors.

There are far too many seniors in Canada, specifically in my riding of Winnipeg North, who are having a difficult time making ends meet and it is because of the whole issue of pension

deficiencies and the need to increase pensions. I have been advocating for this since day one when I was first elected back in late November. I really feel that the budget has fallen short in terms of meeting the needs of our seniors.

I look to my colleague to provide comment as to how she believes the budget has fallen short on that particular issue.

**Ms. Chris Charlton:** Madam Speaker, I wonder whether the member for Winnipeg North would do me the honour of passing on my congratulations to the former member for Elmwood—Transcona for winning a provincial seat in his province.

With respect to seniors issues, the member has raised a really important point. Seniors' retirement savings have plummeted as a result of the decline in the markets. That is why New Democrats have consistently asked that we raise the GIS, so that every senior would be lifted out of poverty. That would cost \$2 billion, \$2 billion that the government had but squandered on continuing tax breaks to the oil and gas industry and on corporate tax cuts.

As well, we have consistently called for the doubling of the CPP because the member is quite right, employment pension plans are increasingly vulnerable and we are certainly seeing that in communities across the country.

I am really delighted that the Liberal Party now appears to be on board with the suggestions that we have made consistently for years now. I welcome his contribution to that debate when we bring these matters forth in the House of Commons.

**Mr. Mike Wallace (Burlington, CPC):** Madam Speaker, it is my pleasure today to share my time with the member for Winnipeg South Centre and to talk about Bill C-13, keeping Canada's economy and jobs growing act.

For those who are new in the House, how this actually works is, every year we put a budget forward in the spring. There is a motion on the budget and it passes through the House as a budget in principle. For it to become law and be implemented, which is partly what we are debating today, there have to be implementation bills. That is what Bill C-13 is. However, the budget is so big that, since I have been here, for five years, it is split into two pieces. One we already passed in the spring. The first phase of the implementation bill has actually gone through the House. There is a ways and means motion that goes with that. For people who do not know what that is, it gives the authority to tax, or change the tax system, and that bill needs to happen.

There is a process. We are in the last part of the process that deals with the budget that we presented. It was turned down by both the NDP and the Liberal Party, as they were in the opposition benches before the election in May. We were progressing. We were doing things for Canadians. The opposition decided that it was time for an election. We had an election and the public, the voters of this country, decided it was time to get some things done. That is why we got elected as a majority government, so we could move our budget processes through, the things we are doing for Canadians and the things we are doing for communities. That is why we are here today talking about the second portion of that budget bill.



*Government Orders*

The implementation bill is actually broken into five parts. There is a section to promote job creation and economic growth, support for communities, help for families, investment in education and training, and respect for taxpayers. I am going to highlight a few things in each piece that is in the bill.

It is a big bill, as my colleague from the Liberal side said because there are important issues that we are dealing with to make sure that we have the economic growth and the job growth, and stability that the country is asking for. That is what Canadians elected us to do, and we are implementing it as of today.

To give some examples of what is in the promote job creation and economic growth piece, we will hear quite a bit today and have heard over the past number of days about the hiring credit we are giving to small businesses, \$1,000 to encourage them to hire new employees. This will create jobs and ensure that we have economic growth in every community across the country.

We are doing other things. I know, as a member of the finance committee for the last five years, that the accelerated capital cost allowance was a big item for our manufacturers. They wanted to see that tool that they could use to invest in their companies and in machinery, so they can grow and supply new customers in order to have the economic growth. In this implementation bill, which we are discussing today, it has the accelerated capital cost allowance treatment for manufacturer investment increased and added to.

There are a couple of things that I wanted to talk about under job creation and economic growth, but there is another area I want to talk about. As a member of city council for 13 years for the City of Burlington, in the region of Halton, rarely did we ever get any support, either from the province or the federal government. In the implementation bill we are making the \$2 billion gas tax fund a permanent fund for municipalities to rely on for their future infrastructure planning. When opposition members vote against that, they are voting against assistance to municipalities. That is what is actually happening.

We have the volunteer firefighters tax credit for volunteer firefighters. In Burlington we have a composite firefighting force, which means we have both professional, or permanent, firefighters and we have a volunteer base. We have a mix, so it is important for us. I heard from my fire chief. I went through an exercise with the firefighting team last Friday, actually. They put me through some training paces and we heard directly from the chief that they are having difficulty attracting and maintaining volunteers, because we all have busy lives. It is an important, key job, particularly in the rural area of Burlington. This tax credit will help them recruit and maintain volunteer firefighters. That is some of the support for our communities that is in the bill.

● (1145)

We are helping families in a number of ways. There is a new tax credit for family caregivers who give assistance at home to family members who are infirm.

There is one point I would like to make and it is very important to me. I used to be an employee of Easter Seals. My wife is an employee of Easter Seals. We help raise money and awareness for disabled kids across the province of Ontario.

Members may not know, but there was a limit of \$10,000 of eligible expenses that caregivers could claim through their medical expense tax credit. Through Bill C-13, which we support and which the voters sent us back here to complete, would remove that \$10,000 limit so families could use the tax credit for all the expenses they incurred for helping those who need that medical expense, whether a child, a mother, a father, a brother or whoever.

I want to remind members opposite that when they vote against the bill, they will vote against that change.

We are also adding a tax credit for children studying the arts. To be frank, my two daughters have been very active in sports, but not the arts. However, as a city councillor, and now as a member of Parliament, I am proud that we have just opened a new performing arts centre in the city of Burlington, which I have worked on since 1999.

I see the value in having children, families and grandparents involved in the arts. This children's tax credit would ensure there would be a level playing field for not only families with children who are active in athletics, but also in the arts. The arts are very important to us. That is why we encourage young people to be involved through this tax credit.

We are investing in education and training. We have a number of improvements to the financial assistance we are providing students. We are making it easier to allocate registered education savings plans to siblings without incurring any penalties. However, a key part to this, which does not affect my riding as much as others, is that we would forgive the loans for doctors and nurses who serve in rural and remote areas.

That is very important to me. I grew up in a little town called Port Elgin on Lake Huron, a rural of Ontario. It is a very lovely area, but it is very difficult to find a doctor. An individual would have to travel for hospital and medical services, as they would do in many parts of the country.

The forgiving of loans would assist communities to attract young medical professionals to their areas to provide the services to those individuals who need them.

In terms of the five items, the final thing I would like to speak to is the respect for taxpayer dollars. The key piece in this one is that we are ending the direct subsidy for political parties. Frankly, it affects the Conservative Party. The way it worked was the more votes we got, the more money we got from the taxpayer. It was a direct subsidy from the taxpayer, whether they voted for us or not.

We are removing that. It would be up to parties to talk to their supporters and get their direct support financially, instead of being like some parties in the House that almost exclusively rely on the taxpayer subsidy to fund their elections and their operations. We do not think that is fair and we do not think it is a good use of taxpayer money.

*Government Orders*

Our government's top priority remains completing the economic recovery. Canadians gave the Conservative government a strong mandate to stay focused on what matters, and that is creating jobs and economic growth. I will leave it at that, and I am happy to answer any questions anyone may have.

• (1150)

[Translation]

**Mr. Denis Blanchette (Louis-Hébert, NDP):** Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for his speech.

Recently, the chairman of the Fed said that government budgets have to be managed prudently, in light of recent events on the economic stage.

I would like to know what my colleague thinks of the current signals. What should be changed or adapted in the budget that was prepared in the spring to take into account today's economic signals?

• (1155)

[English]

**Mr. Mike Wallace:** Madam Speaker, we set out in a plan what we would do during Canada's economic situation. We have committed something to taxpayers and we will deliver. That is what the bill would do. It would put in place the last part of our economic action plan, which includes funding for job growth and infrastructure. All the pieces are in it. We are doing what we need to do.

That does not mean we spend wildly. The previous NDP speaker did not indicate how many billions of dollars New Democrats wanted to add to the debt or the deficit. They just wanted to add money. We had a plan that we set out in the spring, the opposition voted it down so we went to an election. We won the election and we will now implement that plan.

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, the member talks about the Conservatives voting for it and we all understand why you are voting for this bill. We also need to recognize that what you are voting for is not recognized—

**The Deputy Speaker:** Order, please. I would remind hon. members to direct their comments through the Chair.

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux:** Madam Speaker, what the member is also voting for is a tax credit that only applies to volunteer firefighters who have the income to take advantage of the tax credit. People need to have the necessary incomes to benefit from the tax credit. That is a bias against a lot of low-income volunteer firefighters. Would he not at least acknowledge that?

**Mr. Mike Wallace:** Madam Speaker, the member is new but he should look at all tax credits and how many are refundable and non-refundable. I know he understands the difference. He has suggested that if people pay no income tax, they should still get the money. The idea of tax credits are to be applied against taxes paid. That is the bottom line. If people do not pay taxes, they do not get the credit.

I have no problem standing in the House and defending the fact that if people pay taxes, the government will give them an opportunity to reduce their tax burden, but people should not just get a direct payment.

**Mr. David Sweet (Ancaster—Dundas—Flamborough—Westdale, CPC):** Madam Speaker, my colleague from Burlington was my

predecessor as the chairman of the steel caucus. The area we come from has a lot of steel not only in manufacturing but processing as well. Could he share with the House just how important the initiatives are in this budget to ensure we continue to grow the steel industry, the cutting-edge steel, the new innovative steel that is produced in our area? How important is it in these initiatives to grow the jobs of research and development, as well as on the plant floor, in our community?

**Mr. Mike Wallace:** Madam Speaker, one key part of this budget implementation bill is the extension of the capital cost allowance. The president of the steel company in Hamilton has said that companies need it in order to continue to invest and grow and meet the demand. He has said that if they do not have that kind of financial support for their investments, it will make it difficult for them to make the investments and create jobs. In fact, one of the lowest unemployment rates in our country is in Hamilton because of the actions of this government.

**Ms. Joyce Bateman (Winnipeg South Centre, CPC):** Madam Speaker, I am honoured to rise today to speak on behalf of the hard-working families in Winnipeg South Centre. I am privileged to represent such a diverse, active and engaged community. Winnipeg South Centre elected a Conservative because the voters felt, as I did, that Canadians needed strong, stable leadership in a challenging economic climate. Voters in Winnipeg South Centre know that promises to raise taxes and increase spending will not create real sustainable jobs.

Many governments across the western world are struggling under mountainous debt. Meanwhile Canada is being recognized as a financial leader and a model for the world. That is why our plan, the keeping Canada's economy and jobs growing act, is focused on what matters to Canadians: creating jobs and promoting economic growth.

[Translation]

Our government's top priority is to complete the economic recovery. Canadians gave our Conservative government a strong mandate to continue to focus on what is important: job creation and economic growth.

• (1200)

Since July 2009, almost 600,000 net new jobs have been created in Canada. In addition, we are the only G7 nation to have more than recovered all of the production and jobs lost during the economic slowdown.

[English]

There are a number of key elements in our plan which I know will have a positive impact for Winnipeggers, Manitobans and all Canadians.



*Government Orders*

We recognize the vital role that small businesses play in the economy and job creation. That is why we are committed to helping them grow and succeed. The next phase of Canada's economic action plan includes a number of measures to further enable small businesses and entrepreneurs to grow and create jobs.

One example is the hiring credit for small business. This new credit would help up to 525,000 employers defray the cost of additional hires. Winnipeg South Centre has hundreds of small businesses, some in people's homes, some of the best restaurants in Canada and all of them would benefit from this credit when they hire new employees.

A number of students whom our government helped with employment under the Canada summer jobs program gained vital experience and made a difference to their community at the same time. I know these young citizens will be encouraged to hear about our government's support for the Canadian Youth Business Foundation, providing over \$20 million for start-up financing and volunteer business mentors to enable young Canadians to launch more than 1,000 new businesses. With our help, young people are expected to generate more than 6,700 new Canadian jobs.

[Translation]

For that reason, the Prime Minister's government is staying the course with its plan to keep taxes low in order to create jobs and foster economic growth.

[English]

Helping to train the next generation of entrepreneurs is critical to our prosperity, but so is training the next generation of researchers, scientists and innovators. That is why our government is doubling the in-study income exemption for students, benefiting over 100,000 students.

[Translation]

According to the Fédération étudiante universitaire du Québec, and I quote: "there is good news in the current federal budget for Canadian students..."

[English]

Making it easier for families to pay for their children's post-secondary education is just one of the many reasons my constituents are being well served with the budget. Every aspect of education matters to my constituents in Winnipeg South Centre. The government is helping families afford programs that will enrich their children's cultural and artistic education. Our new children's arts tax credit does just that. Modelled on our popular children's fitness tax credit, the children's arts tax credit supports eligible fees for children's artistic, cultural, recreational and developmental activities.

More and more families are feeling the double pressures of caring for growing children and aging parents at the same time. A key part of our plan is the new family caregiver tax credit. This measure supports caregivers who help infirm dependent relatives, including spouses, common-law partners and minor children. This all builds on top of the action our government has already taken to support families since 2006.

We have cut taxes over 120 times since forming government. We cut the lowest personal income tax rate. We cut the marriage penalty for one-income families. We have added the universal child care benefit. We have added the child tax credit. We added the landmark tax-free savings account and we added the registered disability savings plan to help children who live with disabilities.

In addition to this tax relief, families are benefiting from other new targeted measures like the first-time homebuyers' tax credit, the expanded home buyers' plan and the public transit tax credit. Families in Winnipeg South Centre are benefiting today from the strong actions our government is taking and has taken to provide tax relief and grow our economy.

Our community and country are benefiting from some broader measures as well. We provided \$20 million for youth crime prevention to promote programs that help youth resist and exit gangs. We are enhancing the guaranteed income supplement so that eligible low-income seniors will receive additional annual benefits. We have extended the eco-energy retrofit homes program to help families lower their heating bills and electricity bills by making their homes more energy efficient. Our low-tax plan for jobs and growth is working.

This week *Forbes*, the influential business magazine, has ranked Canada as the best country in the world to do business. The IMF is forecasting Canada will have the strongest overall economic growth in the G7 over the next two years. Canada has the lowest total government net debt to GDP ratio in the entire G7, by far.

● (1205)

[Translation]

The last thing the Canadian economy needs right now is the massive tax hike proposed by the NDP. A tax increase would result in job cuts, paralyze our recovery and shrink the purchasing power of Canadian families. The next phase of Canada's economic action plan will preserve Canada's advantage in the global economy.

[English]

Tremendous economic instability in Europe and slowing growth in the U.S. make a challenging economic environment.

[Translation]

We are not immune to the volatility of the global economy, which is caused primarily by a lack of confidence in governments' efforts to reduce their deficits.

This crisis is an important opportunity for Canada to show leadership and promote solid, sustainable and balanced medium-term growth, as well as improve market confidence and foster global economic recovery.

[English]

Canadians can be confident we will follow our prudent and pragmatic plan to lower their taxes and grow our economy together.

*Government Orders*

[Translation]

Together, we are stronger.

[English]

**Mr. Pat Martin (Winnipeg Centre, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I remember a time when the Conservative Party of old, in previous incarnations such as the Canadian Alliance, perhaps, or the Reform Party before that, used to rail with indignation whenever the big bad Liberal government of the day would impose closure. I remember how they used to vilify Don Boudria, the House leader of the Liberal Party at the time. We had guys like Randy White doing a Mexican hat dance out in the lobby to demonstrate how furious they were. There was gnashing of teeth, rending of garments over the outrage and the affront to democracy in shutting down the debate and the scrutiny, oversight and testing of the merits of legislation that come from full debate.

My colleague is relatively new to the House and formerly associated with the Liberal Party that we all used to criticize for imposing closure some 88 times in one session of Parliament. We used to vilify the party that she used to be associated with. Now she is sitting with a party that has come to resemble that which it used to criticize the most vigorously, which is the denial of the most basic democracy through full debate in the House of Commons.

• (1210)

**Ms. Joyce Bateman:** Mr. Speaker, I need to clarify a few of the issues that the member has raised.

First of all, he made a comment about gnashing of teeth and rending of garments. When I was campaigning to be elected as a member of the House of Commons, no one was grinding their teeth. They were saying, "Let's get the job done. Let's work together. Let's make sure our young people are not crippled with a mortgage for the rest of their lives, called a big bad deficit". These were the comments that I heard when I was at the door. I heard people saying that we should get on with the business of Canada, be proud that we're doing so well and work together to make things happen.

That is what I heard when I went to the doors of the good constituents of Winnipeg South Centre, and I am so sorry that the member opposite had a different experience.

His next point was about my past membership in the Liberal Party of Canada. I changed because of its reckless spending approach to Canada and Canadians, and I was joined by hundreds of thousands of Canadians who voted the same way, with their feet, including my colleague here.

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I had one question and now, in listening, I have been inspired to comment on something different.

Some of the biggest recognition around the world has been in regard to Canada's banking industry, and there should be no surprise there. We know it was former Prime Minister Jean Chrétien and former Minister of Finance Paul Martin who actually established and guaranteed the strong banking industry that we have today here in Canada.

On balance, in terms of expenditures and revenues, the former Liberal government outperforms the current government on virtually

every economic point. In fact, one could argue that the highest unemployment predictions were of Kim Campbell: I can remember the 1993 election, when she said we were going to be into double-digit unemployment, and the Liberals said no.

Would the member not recognize that the Liberals' history in government is actually better than that of the government that we have seen in the last few years?

**Ms. Joyce Bateman:** Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague, who also comes from Winnipeg and serves Winnipeg North, for his comments.

I beg to differ with him. What was wrong with the approach to deficit reduction taken by past Liberal governments, whether of Mr. Chrétien or Mr. Martin, was that it reduced the deficit on the backs of education and health care. The former Liberal government reduced the deficit on the backs of transfer payments to our partner provinces.

This government, the Harper government—

**Mr. Mike Wallace:** You cannot call it the Harper government.

[Translation]

**Ms. Joyce Bateman:** Mr. Speaker, I apologize. I am new here.

[English]

The government does not want to paralyze the importance of education. I served for ten and a half years as a school trustee in Winnipeg, so I can be trusted when I say it is an important investment. I am proud that the government will not be making any efforts to reduce those investments we make in provinces.

**Mr. Matthew Kellway (Beaches—East York, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I wish to advise you that I will be splitting my time today with my colleague from Winnipeg Centre as part of what seems to be the all-party Winnipeg caucus here in the House today.

On this side of the House, we often refer to the Conservative government as being out of touch. That language is often dismissed by the government as rhetorical flourish, but if there was ever evidence of this point it is this bill, Bill C-13, and more broadly the approach of the government to the economy of this country.

Since the Canadian economy came crashing down around us in 2008, very many Canadians have been affected profoundly and in material ways. While in technical terms a recovery of sorts followed, and for some it was in material terms, what never dissipated was a sense of economic insecurity and worry.

In my riding of Beaches—East York, from the neighbourhoods where poverty and unemployment are deep and persistent, through East York and down to the beach, people from all walks of life and living in all sorts of circumstances are worried.



*Government Orders*

Those who have lived in the hope that they will someday enjoy some material comfort and security see those prospects becoming more remote. Those who have experienced material comfort and security wonder whether it will last. Those who have accumulated some savings wonder whether it will survive for its intended purpose, whether that be retirement or the kids' education.

The worry, of course, is not unfounded. In 2008 we were plunged into the worst recession in over 70 years. The recovery has been tentative and much slower than has historically been the case, with the persistent threat of a second significant economic contraction. Of course we are bombarded daily with news and images of economic catastrophes occurring or threatening to occur all around us, including with our biggest trading partners, the United States and Europe.

It was in this context of well-founded and widespread economic concern that I opened the paper the other day to read that our Minister of Finance had said he is prepared to let these circumstances persist until such time as the technocrats looking in the rear-view mirror tell him that we are, or more properly were, in economic trouble.

Now, what is it that we do not know here? We know that Canada is a small and very open economy, and therefore we are far from immune to global economic turmoil. We know that the largest economies in the world today, Europe and the United States, are in fact experiencing considerable turmoil.

We know also that they are our largest trading partners. With respect to the United States in particular, we know that there is a high correlation between its economic growth and our own. This is particularly the case in my own province of Ontario. For example, had the U.S. recovery from 2008 been a typical recovery, their GDP would be 2.5% higher, and Canadian exports would be 6.5% greater.

With European and U.S. economies struggling and our dollar remaining persistently high, it appears that we will be stuck with a massive current account deficit for some considerable time. Unemployment levels remain stubbornly high, particularly for youth, and are forecast to go higher.

We also know that things could get worse—much worse, in fact. In the quaint phraseology of the Governor of the Bank of Canada, “The risks...are skewed to the downside”.

According to a September 30 forecast from *TD Economics*:

In our view, there is a 40% recession risk in the United States over the next year.

This leads to the obvious conclusion that our own risk of a slip back into a recession remains heightened. Thankfully, not all economists are as technocratic and as out of touch as the government. In response to the minister's pledge to wait and see what happened, and note the past tense, BMO capital markets economist Douglas Porter said:

I think the risks of a downturn in North America are serious enough that the government should definitely have a Plan B.

That plan B is, of course, what we on this side of the House have been arguing for: government investment in infrastructure.

● (1215)

Mr. Porter went on to say:

Infrastructure spending is one of the most effective short-term stimulus measures a government can use, but it takes time to get it going and that's why we should be studying a Plan B right now.

We know that economists can be just as adapt at fighting among themselves as we are in this chamber but there does seem to be near unanimous agreement with the value of infrastructure spending in economic circumstances such as those that we are experiencing today.

As was pointed out at the time of the debate over the budget, even the annex to the government's document entitled, “CANADA'S ECONOMIC ACTION PLAN Year 2: Built to keep our economy growing”, a seventh report to Canadians, confirms the potency of stimulus spending on infrastructure, particularly in comparison to other measures.

It is not as though we are lacking infrastructure in need of repair. Our cities are experiencing an infrastructure deficit in the order of \$123 billion. In addition, the Federation of Canadian Municipalities has estimated new infrastructure requirements totalling \$115 billion.

While economists, very gently and generously, urge the development of a plan B, it seems fair and responsible for us to call out first for a plan A, because Bill C-13 does not add up to a plan. What Bill C-13 amounts to is paralysis, not planning. Were it the case that the government was frozen with a plan in place, that would be one thing, but what is frozen in place here is policy confusion.

The central policy piece of the government's response to our economic circumstances is the cut to corporate tax rates. As a stimulus measure, that is, as a measure that is responsive to the economic circumstances of Canadians, we know that this measure does not work.

First, it does not create jobs. A study of almost 200 large Canadian corporations that benefited from corporate tax cuts starting in 2000, showed that by 2009 profits had increased by 50%. Their corporate tax remittances had decreased by 20%, or \$12 billion a year, while creating jobs at a rate slower than the national average.

Second, corporate tax cuts do not stimulate investment. Capital spending in Canada has been declining as a share of GDP since the early 1980s despite corporate tax cuts that have reduced the combined federal-provincial tax rate from 50% to just less than 30% last year.

Third, the U.S. treasury loves our corporate tax rates. American corporations repatriating their profits to the United States are obligated to pay 35% corporate tax minus a credit for taxes already paid in Canada. The amount of tax revenue flowing to the U.S. treasury, which is the amount of tax revenue foregone by Canadian jurisdictions owing to our lower corporate tax rate, is estimated to be between \$4 billion and \$6 billion per year.

*Government Orders*

Finally, as a policy prescription for our current circumstances, corporate tax cuts miss the mark by a wide margin. In spite of the economic misery and insecurity faced by so many Canadians, corporate profits have continued to increase year over year. Corporations are now sitting on half a trillion dollars of cash, the world is awash with goods, keeping inflation numbers in check, and it is in this context of over-supply that the government is prescribing, of all things, expanding supply. It makes no sense.

The prescription for what ails us is very different. We need to boost demand. While corporate profits increased by 15% in the second quarter of this year, the real disposable income of Canada was shrinking. Real wage growth fell year over year by 1.3% in July. That includes a 2.3% decline in Ontario. Meanwhile, households are finally strapped, carrying record loads of debt.

This is why, in part, our party champions creating jobs through government investment in infrastructure, more profitable pensions for seniors, increasing EI benefit eligibility and free collective bargaining, all measures that are responsive to the needs of the Canadian economy and economic growth.

• (1220)

When we cast our eyes forward, it is clear that this country not only faces some economic challenges, but also some incredible opportunities. Seizing those opportunities for the benefit of Canadians to ensure health and prosperity for Canadians is the responsibility of our government. On this account, the government, like its predecessor, has failed miserably. For years, it has insisted on locking Canada into disadvantageous and disproportionate trading relationships.

Finally, I want to pick up on the words of the Governor of the Bank of Canada. He stated:

...Canada is like a ship. We can be tossed by the waves or pulled by the current, but we are still able to chart our course in even the stormiest of seas.

I do not see a course set here by the government. To the contrary, the government has left Canadians bobbing in stormy economic seas.

• (1225)

**Mr. Mike Wallace (Burlington, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I thank my hon. colleague for his discussion on Bill C-13, even though I completely disagree with his approach.

I want to ensure that the opposition members understand. If they look at the 2009-10 public accounts books, because we are a year behind in public accounts, corporate tax revenue for the Government of Canada is 13.9% and personal income tax is 47.6%.

The opposition members talk about an infrastructure program and so on. Have they set a number for how big a deficit they want this country to carry? How much more would they add to the debt? How much more money would they borrow to make that happen? Will they tell Canadians exactly how much they would increase personal incomes tax to pay for it or cut spending? How would they do it? There is only one way to get money and that is by either cutting spending or increasing revenues.

The opposition members are talking about a huge infrastructure program but they will not tell us what the numbers are. They would

need to raise taxes, and the vast majority of taxes in this country are collected from personal income tax.

**Mr. Matthew Kellway:** Mr. Speaker, I heard my friends from across the aisle criticizing our party for a lack of sophistication on economic issues. However, what I think we just saw was an illustration of quite the opposite. Members on the other side of the House seem not only to not understand basic economics but they do not even seem to understand the budget documents that they are putting out.

In the report that I cited, the seventh report to Canadians on the economic action plan, the appendix, or the annex as they call it, for job creation spells out for us what the economic multipliers are of various forms of government investment. This is a way of governments investing in our economy to create jobs and, in doing so, create government revenues. This is basic math. It is basic economics. It is the economics of the Department of Finance. It is the economics of so many economists speaking for the big banks of Canada and for the Bank of Canada itself.

The party opposite should have a closer at economics and how to create jobs and increase economic growth in this country.

**Mr. Rodger Cuzner (Cape Breton—Canso, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I know my friend from the NDP, the member for Beaches—East York, is new to this place but I am sure he is very familiar with what took place a number of years ago with the fall economic update by the present government.

The government at that time did not recognize that there was an economic downturn in our midst. We were pretty much engulfed in an economic downturn globally but the Conservatives refused to come forward with any kind of incentive package, any kind of investment package, anything to try to stimulate the economy. At that time, and it was well documented, the opposition parties banded together and said that it was unacceptable and that it would hurt our country. That was prompted by a gross misunderstanding of what was going on in the world and in this country. The opposition parties told the government to get off its duff, put a package together and ensure we invest in Canada.

Now, the Conservatives have almost separated their shoulders by slapping themselves on the back taking credit for it.

Does my colleague see any reason to show confidence in the current government? Has it learned anything since that time?

**Mr. Matthew Kellway:** Mr. Speaker, it appears that the government has not learned anything from that time. When I came into this House, we had a regurgitated budget that I think over 60% of Canadians effectively rejected in the election. We now have a continuation of the same prescriptions for this economy.

The problem, of course, is that our economic circumstances have taken a significant downward turn, even since June when the budget was passed. What concerns me is that the government seems to have paid no heed to these circumstances.



• (1230)

**Mr. Pat Martin (Winnipeg Centre, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague from Beaches—East York for not only sharing his time with me but for the thoughtful presentation he just gave on Bill C-13.

Some members of the House today are newly elected members and so I will begin by prefacing my remarks by saying that there is nothing normal about what they are seeing unfold today. I do not want them to think that the House of Commons debates have been, or should be, curtailed and shut down by use of time allocation motions and closure in the way they may have seen as newly elected members in this 41st Parliament. In fact, closure, in and of itself, is an affront to democracy.

We are seeing a worrisome motif that the government is using, misusing and abusing closure to a point where it is detrimental to the institution of Parliament itself and the fundamental, most basic tenets of democracy.

I am not overstating things when I say that democracy is undermined by the use of closure in such a cavalier manner. Time allocation has always been in the standing orders but it was meant to be used judiciously, only after a matter of debate had been dealt with in a fulsome way and when all members who wished to speak to a bill had the opportunity. When there is deliberate obstruction of parliamentary procedure, that is when a government of the day may contemplate the use of the closure.

However, what we have seen in the 41st Parliament are huge, complicated omnibus bills being given a day or two of consideration by this chamber and then, bam, the heavy hammer comes down and we have the iron fist of time allocation and closure. Nobody should ever accept this as the norm. I hope the Canadian people are taking note because it is worthy to note.

I have been elected six times to this chamber. I was an opposition member during the times when the Liberal government was in majority and we criticized it vigorously for what we thought was an overuse of time allocation and closure. Frankly, the Liberals were pikers at the game because at least when it was introduced by our colleagues, the Liberals, it was after days and days and weeks and weeks of debate on a certain bill. Yes, there were people who would have liked to have spoken again on a bill, but at least every member of the chamber had ample opportunity on behalf of their constituents to wade into a debate.

It is getting to be a matter of privilege, and I would like to see that researched. It gets to be a matter of parliamentary privilege when members are systematically denied the right to stand in this chamber and voice the concerns of the people who sent them here to represent them.

I am being allowed 10 minutes to debate a bill of this magnitude and substance. Frankly, Bill C-13 is perhaps the most important bill of Parliament in that it is the introduction of the manifestation of the whole financial cycle of estimates, to budgets to budget implementation, et cetera. No bill put forward by a government within the parliamentary cycle is more critical than the budget implementation act and we are being denied the right to give it a thorough vetting in the House.

### *Government Orders*

Having said that, and with such limited time, I will limit my remarks to broad-brushed impressions of what the bill seeks to do.

I saw a bumper sticker when I was in Washington, D.C. last year that kind of says it all. It said, "At least the war on the middle class is going well". That sums up the attitude that we are seeing in the government's introduction of its budgetary process and the frustration that has manifested itself and is playing out on Wall Street as we speak.

• (1235)

The Americans were quicker to go into this blind faith that the corporate world had their best interests at heart. They were first to go into it, but they seem to be the first to come out of it as well. Americans are sick of rewarding the very architects of the economic malaise they find themselves in, whereas we are plowing ahead with that exact same mindset by rewarding corporate Canada, which has failed us with its wretched excess, greed and failure to provide the leadership in its own corporate sector. We are going to reward that sector. The biggest ticket item in this fiscal year's spending priority is in fact another \$6 billion tax cut for corporations.

I come from the province of Manitoba. The small business tax in Manitoba was 11% when the New Democrats took power in 1999. That small business tax has been systematically reduced to zero. The NDP has just been re-elected to its fourth majority government in that province partly because the targeted tax cuts which the NDP government put in place were in an area that would in fact generate jobs and stimulate the economy. That is giving a break to small entrepreneurs who will in fact reinvest in their businesses and create jobs. No such empirical evidence exists about the much larger tax giveaway that is contemplated by the government in this fiscal year of \$6 billion more in corporate tax cuts.

My colleague from Beaches—East York said that the Department of Finance itself recognizes that infrastructure investment has five times the economic impact of corporate income tax cuts. This fact is published in the appendix to budget 2009. We know full well where the bang for the buck is and yet the government seems to feel some obedient subservience to the very architects of the economic malaise we are experiencing. It rewards bad behaviour with even more handouts, the biggest corporate giveaway, by the way, since the review of the drug patent law in the mid-1990s when drug patents were extended from 17 years to 20 years. That was a corporate handout to Pfizer and others by the Liberal government of the day.

The Conservatives are plowing ahead by borrowing \$6 billion because they do not have it. We are in a deficit situation so they do not have the \$6 billion to give to corporate Canada, but they are going to give it anyway.

As my colleague from Beaches—East York pointed out, that profit is not even domestic. In fact, very often these corporations are actually foreign corporations. They take that money and expatriate it back to the United States where they came from and the United States taxes them at a reasonable rate of 35% on their foreign earnings abroad.

### *Government Orders*

The government of the day is not thinking of the big picture. We have a shrinking middle class. Wages are shrinking from year to year when adjusted for inflation. When I began my remarks I said that at least the war on the middle class is going well, but have the Conservatives thought through what it will do to the economy when they injure the consuming middle class, when they fail to promote and expand the consuming middle class? If it is a low wage, low cost economy they are striving for, let me remind them that we cannot shrink our way to prosperity. No country has ever shrunk its way to prosperity. Countries grow their way to prosperity. Even Henry Ford understood that workers with money in their pockets are going to buy one of the products they create. Somehow we seem to have lost that mindset.

The Conservatives' war on labour and the left is another example of what they intend to do. When Ronald Reagan was in power, he managed to reduce the unionized workforce in the United States from 33% to 12%. It is now at 5%. The war on labour and the left is just beginning with the Conservatives' majority government. This bill is the first indication of the type of financial planning they intend to do. It is deficient. It is faulty. It is old-school thinking. It is so last century that it does not serve the needs of the working people I represent.

• (1240)

**Mr. Mike Wallace (Burlington, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I listened intently to the speech by my colleague from Winnipeg Centre and I was a little confused. I have heard him speak before and he sometimes is confusing. I would like him to clarify.

In one part of his speech he said he was opposed to business tax deductions that would help stimulate the economy and create jobs. Then he went on to talk about his home province, which happens to have an NDP government, and I congratulate the NDP on its re-election, and it has reduced its business taxes to zero on some levels. That has been great for Manitoba's economy and has created jobs for small business.

Is he for it or against it? Does he know? Does he understand that the vast majority of businesses in this country are incorporated and that they will all benefit from corporate tax deductions? If he could clarify, that would be great, but I am not sure he can.

**Mr. Pat Martin:** Mr. Speaker, my colleague would know, if he had been listening to the NDP for the last three, four or five years, that we have always said we would support the government in a small business tax cut, a reduction in small business taxes. What the government of the day has done year after year is it has given big corporate tax cuts. The beneficiaries of that are not the small entrepreneur and the small businessman who are struggling. Frankly, the companies that need the support and help are not earning and paying taxes on earnings anyway. It is the big profitable corporations that are getting it.

If the Conservatives want social benefit and social change from their spending and to put more money into circulation to stimulate the economy, the single most important thing they could do is to elevate all seniors out of poverty. For \$700 million, for less than one-tenth essentially of the corporate tax cut, all seniors could have been at least lifted to the poverty line. Seniors do not squirrel that money away in an offshore tax haven. They spend it in the local economy

and it gets re-spent four times before it finds its natural state of repose in some rich man's pocket.

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, earlier a Conservative member made reference to the fact that we have a choice between raising taxes or borrowing money. One of the things that is often overlooked is the issue of spending smarter. The Conservative budget is lacking in terms of how we could do a better job with the scarce resources that we have. I look for comment from the member because in many ways we represent neighbourhoods of a similar nature.

If the Government of Canada were to invest in housing stock through revitalization programs and provide the tax incentives to encourage urban revitalization of some of our older communities, we would be generating jobs and improving the housing conditions of our communities. Would the member agree that is a good way of spending smarter? It would cost taxpayers less money and would create more jobs. Would the member agree with that assessment?

**Mr. Pat Martin:** Mr. Speaker, sometimes I think the government of the day is channelling Brian Mulroney—give those members some Gucci shoes and the transformation will be complete—when it comes to gold-plated business cards or grandiose, overinflated, wild, irresponsible and reckless spending. Targeted, specific, useful spending on infrastructure or, as my colleague suggested, low-income housing stock is the kind of targeted spending that would stimulate the economy and put more people back to work. Perhaps it does not have the cachet of 65 new F-35 fighter jets or the wheelbarrows full of dough the Conservatives dutifully dump into Bay Street on a regular basis. Maybe it is the job of the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance to deliver the booty to Bay Street on his way to work in the morning. Those of us on this side of the House know that we cannot afford that kind of dutiful obligation to the Conservatives' corporate masters.

• (1245)

**Mr. Dean Del Mastro (Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister and to the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, It is a pleasure to speak to this important bill.

Mr. Speaker, I will be sharing my time with the exciting new member for Okanagan—Coquihalla. It is not that I could not speak for 20 minutes. In fact, as the previous speaker said, I could speak at length about all the wonderful measures contained in this document, but I want to share that opportunity with an exciting new member of Parliament.



*Government Orders*

The previous speaker, a member of the NDP who is not short on colourful metaphors when describing things, indicated if we had just listened to the NDP the budget would look quite different. I would argue that I have been listening to the NDP. That is why I knew I had to win my election in Peterborough. Heaven forbid the New Democrats would ever have any say on the economics of this country, because where they would take it certainly would not be the leading position within the G7. It would not be a position which the IMF says is enviable. It would not be, as *Forbes* magazine declared just this week, the best place in the world to invest.

That is our Canada. That is the Canada our Prime Minister and the Minister of Finance, with the support of this caucus, have worked hard to create. I would also note that the Minister of State for Finance has also played a very big role in that.

This bill is important. We heard the previous member talk a little about business. He talked about corporations. How he speaks about corporations in this country disturbs me. Corporations, investments, and obviously the jobs they create are critically important to communities. Those job creators are constantly being slammed and talked about as if they were entities that should be attacked by the state. That seems to be the NDP's mantra.

A few moments ago my colleague from Burlington indicated in his question that many corporations in Canada, some of them quite small, are benefiting from the tax measures we have put in place in our budgets. I would be remiss if I did not mention a specific example.

This budget extends the accelerated capital cost allowance for manufacturers. That allows manufacturers to upgrade their equipment sooner and to do it in a more economical fashion, but it is only a tax deferral. However, it makes the business case better for investing right here in Canada. On top of that, we have also reduced the overall corporate tax rates.

When those two things are put together, it helps companies in my riding like McCloskey International, a very significant equipment manufacturer that is growing. I would invite any member to visit that plant to see the kind of growth it has experienced since 2006, to see the kind of growth that plant has experienced since we came forward with Advantage Canada, our blueprint economic plan for Canada. We brought that forward in 2007. We made it clear. We made a promise to Canada's employers and to Canadians as to how we would govern the finances of this country.

That company, McCloskey International in Peterborough, has grown by leaps and bounds. When I have talked to its owner, Paschal McCloskey, he has told me that in no small measure the amount of growth we have seen in Canada is due to the actions our government has taken to reduce his costs of manufacturing and doing business in Canada.

We have made investments in partnership with him through programs like the eastern Ontario development program and through the new Southern Ontario development agency, FedDev Ontario. We have made targeted investments in education. The Canadian universities association was very supportive of the budget. The colleges were very supportive of the budget. Students recognized that the budget made fundamental investments.

There are many items in the budget that are so important. This implementation bill is the actual meat of the budget being put into action.

• (1250)

When we follow through on these commitments, companies like McCloskey International can continue to grow. What it told me was that because of the measures we put in place, it could manufacture equipment cheaper and more efficiently on the east side of Peterborough than it could in Ireland, or at one of their other European facilities. That has allowed the company to expand its workforce dramatically. It has more than doubled in the last three years. A lot of middle-class families now have an income.

I would invite the hon. member from Winnipeg to come back and ask me a question about the middle-class families in my riding that have a job directly attributable to the government's economic leadership. It is fundamental and important.

We talk about promoting jobs and economic growth by providing a temporary hiring credit for small business to encourage additional hiring. The NDP has indicated that it would like to see this, but it will vote against it. It just does not make any sense. As a former owner and operator of a small business that had a couple of dozen employees, this is the type of incentive that encourages people to hire. It reduces the overall cost of employment. It is not just the wages paid, it is the employment taxes on top of that which also have to be taken into account. This kind of incentive is very important for small business.

I would also note that the member from Winnipeg also indicated that he would like to see lower taxes on businesses. I remember, and I am sure some of my colleagues who have been here since 2006 remember it well, that the member voted against small business tax reductions every time we introduced them. When we raised the cap for capital gains that small businesses could in fact be exempt from, the member voted against it. When we reduced the tax rate from 12% to 11%, the member voted against it. When we moved the limits from \$300,000 to \$400,000 when the tax rates would change over, which were big moves for small business, the NDP consistently voted against it.

The NDP also voted against all the infrastructure investments and the things on which small businesses thrive, such as good roads, good infrastructure for things like the Internet. I note the Speaker has been a strong advocate for eastern Ontario. The government has made a fundamental investment into broadband Internet in our region. This is an infrastructure investment that will help us encourage more investment, on top of the tax measures that we have put in place, even on top of things like the volunteer firefighters tax credit. This encourages the building of small communities.

### *Government Orders*

We are following a plan that encourages economic growth and job creation, and it is balanced. When we are reducing taxes, building infrastructure, helping people who live in the communities to undertake their volunteer positions, or just to live in those communities, we are coming forward with a balanced economic plan. That is why that balanced economic plan is leading the G7. That is why we are going to stay the course. Only by staying the course, continuing to keep taxes low, eliminating debt and making the investments for the future that need to be made, will Canada continue to lead all nations. That is our goal. We have said it many times.

I remember just a couple of weeks ago, the British prime minister spoke in the House and said that the 21st century may very well belong to Canada. It is because of the leadership of this government, of this caucus, the Prime Minister and the Minister of Finance.

I will close with just a couple of quotes, which I think are important. Here is what the Canadian Manufacturers and Exporters had to say:

The extension of the two year write-off for investments in manufacturing and processing technologies announced in...[Budget 2011] is critical to sustaining Canada's economic recovery.

The member said that our party was attacking unions. This is what the Canadian Labour Congress had to say:

—the CLC has pushed hard for an increase in the Guaranteed Income Supplement...paid to 1.6 million low income seniors. [The Finance] Minister has made a modest improvement to the GIS in this budget. This is a win for every senior living in poverty...

The NDP voted against it.

I also point out that the Ontario Federation of Anglers and Hunters, a huge organization that does so much promoting an outdoor lifestyle, and is based in Peterborough, said, among other things, that it applauded the inclusion of items in budget 2011 that would benefit the outdoor community across Canada. I cannot understand why the NDP would vote against that.

• (1255)

[Translation]

**Ms. Rosane Doré Lefebvre (Alfred-Pellan, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the member opposite for his speech and ask him a question about the budget.

The members talk a lot about investments and the economy but I find it very sad that they do not talk about the people in this country who are using food banks. Over 850,000 people used food banks last year, which is an increase of 70,000 people in one year.

What do the members opposite think they can do in the new budget to help these people who desperately need food and assistance?

[English]

**Mr. Dean Del Mastro:** Mr. Speaker, we are going to continue on our focus toward promoting economic growth and job creation because that is the surest path to helping those less fortunate. In my community I participate in fundraisers for groups like Kawartha Food Share that help those less fortunate. We have worked to raise significant funding for them.

However, the ability for a government and a community to help those less fortunate is in building a stronger community and having a stronger government. We cannot give from a position of weakness. The positions put forward by the NDP to take on more debt, more spending and higher taxes would weaken Canada's economy and Canada's government and leave us unable to help those less fortunate in our communities.

**Mr. Scott Simms (Bonaville—Gander—Grand Falls—Windsor, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I have a few questions for the hon. member.

He talked about the most vulnerable in society and I find that group somehow was overlooked. He talked about the CLC and that it was quoted as saying "a modest increase". That is not the increase it was looking for. That is rather disingenuous. He should quote it in its entirety because we are looking at an increase that is well over that, in fact a little over two times that, in order to bring most of these seniors out of that vulnerable stage.

I will take one example, and I hope he talks to this specifically. The volunteer firefighter tax credit that the Conservatives brag about so much is a non-refundable tax credit. This basically means that the most vulnerable in society, those low-income people, will not benefit one dollar from this tax credit. A person would have to make above a certain level of income in order to get any benefit from this tax credit. Why is this tax credit not a refundable tax credit, much like the other tax credits budgeted, so the most vulnerable would share in that benefit?

**Mr. Dean Del Mastro:** Mr. Speaker, if the member speaks to the volunteer firefighters in his community, and I have spoken to mine, this is a very significant move. It is not a new program, but we have increased the program that previously existed. Firefighters in my community have come forward to let me know that they appreciate this and that they know their voices have been heard.

On the other point brought forward by the member regarding old age security and GIS, this is a significant increase in GIS and the Liberal Party voted against it. I wonder why the Liberals would do that. The bottom line is when people are in need, we do what we can to help them. The government made a very significant increase in GIS and all parties should have been able to rally around that and support it. It is unfortunate that they did not.

**Mr. Dan Albas (Okanagan—Coquihalla, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I am honoured to rise in the House today to speak in support of Bill C-13, keeping Canada's economy and jobs growing act.

As this is my first time as a member of Parliament to have the opportunity to speak in support of a bill, I would like to say what an honour it is to be here on behalf of the citizens in my riding of Okanagan—Coquihalla.

While it is easy to cite statistics and quote numbers in support of the bill, Canada's economic performance and job creation record are without equal under the leadership of this government. However, it is more important to share with members of the House how the policies and direction contained in the bill would create jobs and support our Canadian economy.



*Government Orders*

Before I begin, I feel the need to share something that is important. Day in and day out in the House we consistently hear the opposition attack the very notion that any form of tax relief or tax incentive for a business is somehow a bad thing. Yet it is the same business community that provides the jobs that keep our citizens employed and our economy strong.

Perhaps I am too new, but I believe that members opposite care about jobs and keeping citizens employed in their ridings that they represent. However, it is not talk or increases in taxation that create jobs. It is economic policy and investment that will help create employment. That is why I will be supporting the bill.

I would like to speak to a very specific example of one of the many important job creation aspects contained in Bill C-13 and how that would create jobs in my riding of Okanagan—Coquihalla.

Bill C-13 proposes to extend the accelerated capital cost allowance for investments in manufacturing and processing machinery and equipment for two years.

The community of Okanagan Falls in my riding was particularly hard hit by the collapse of the U.S. lumber industry. The economic fall-out resulted in the community's largest employer Weyerhaeuser lumber mill to shut down. I am certain that other members in the House know first-hand what kind of economic devastation that can create in a small community such as a loss of jobs, the decrease to the total tax base and the increase of incidents of domestic violence. These are some of the unfortunate byproducts of unemployment.

To add insult to injury, the mountain beetle epidemic also threatened much of the local timber supply around Okanagan Falls and many forest-dependent communities in British Columbia.

This past June I was back in Okanagan Falls to attend the opening of Canada's, and in fact North America's, first large scale, state-of-the-art cross-laminated timber manufacturing production facility. This new plant created many vitally needed well-paying jobs in Okanagan Falls.

However, we have to recognize that this plant represents a multi-million dollar investment. The machinery and equipment alone are highly specialized and critical to the operation and success of this plant. The big master is the world's largest planer. It is one of the keys to the success of cross-laminated construction. Unfortunately, it is also incredibly expensive.

That is why it is critically important to extend the accelerated capital cost allowance for investments in manufacturing machinery and equipment, exactly as Bill C-13 proposes. In fact, it is precisely these tax incentives and relief policies that ensure that big businesses invest in big equipment like the big master. The big master, that mammoth-sized planer, creates jobs. The opposition sees big business as nothing more than a source to increase taxes, but increasing taxes means more money flows to Ottawa instead of investing in jobs and equipment like the big master.

This is a really important success story and I hope all members, especially the opposition, will listen carefully as I continue.

The new jobs and machinery at this cross-laminated timber manufacturing plant will create highly specialized cross-lam panels that are used in commercial and industrial applications as a

replacement for concrete. Compared to concrete the cross-lam panels are six to seven times lighter and, as a result, are much more easier and economical to transport. They also require considerably less energy to produce and generate less waste, so it is also a more environmentally friendly product.

Here is what is really exciting. Cross-laminated timber can actually use surplus pine beetle killed timber as a fibre source. This is potentially the first commercially viable application for beetle wood in a structural application. What is more, cross-laminated construction can create in the very near future an entire wood sourced building that has vastly superior earthquake resistance than anything currently on the market. Think about the job potential of state-of-the-art, economically constructed earthquake resistant structures for a province like British Columbia that is strategically located to the Asia-Pacific gateway. The potential is huge.

● (1300)

All that stands in the way is another multi-million dollar investment in equipment and machinery from business. That is why the proposal in this bill to extend the accelerated capital cost allowance for investments in manufacturing and processing machinery equipment is so critically important. It creates jobs and has the potential to create a whole new industry, an innovative value-added sector that could be a boon to many forest-dependent communities.

Bill C-13 also proposes to extend the mineral exploration tax credit for flow-through share investors by one year to support Canada's mining sector.

Recently the premier of British Columbia announced that more provincial resources would be allocated to help the opening of eight new mines.

Let us also recognize that big business is the same big business that the opposition likes to try to tax out of existence. These are the very companies that are needed to invest literally hundreds of millions of dollars in machinery and equipment which in turn create not just jobs but high-paying jobs, even jobs for working people. We all know the term "working people" includes the exclusive worker who the opposition members consistently place ahead of all others.

Before we can have mines that lead to jobs we need mineral exploration. The mineral exploration tax credit helps create mines which help create these jobs.

In my riding of Okanagan—Coquihalla is the Highland Valley copper mine. It provides hundreds of well-paying jobs.

*Government Orders*

Recently big business announced its intention to invest \$475 million to upgrade Highland Valley's mill to extend its output and its ore recovery. This announcement also allowed for a five year new tentative agreement between big business and the workers who are members of the United Steelworkers Union.

Instead of sending more money to Ottawa, as the opposition is calling for, big business is investing money directly into my riding where it continues to create more well-paying jobs. I raise this because it is important for the members of the opposition to realize that we cannot tax business out of existence. Business has to have the funds to reinvest and create jobs.

I have briefly touched on just two points in Bill C-13 to illustrate how this bill can and will help to create jobs in my riding of Okanagan—Coquihalla, as well as continue to help keep our economy strong.

There are over 20 other measures contained in Bill C-13 that will also create jobs and support the local economy in my region. The temporary hiring credit for small business, the permanent annual investment of \$2 billion in the gas tax fund, the family caregiver tax, and the new children's arts tax credit are a few examples.

I also believe Bill C-13 will support jobs and the economy as well as provide a balance that will help families and seniors improve their quality of life. I thank the members opposite for listening to my comments and the reasons that I will be supporting Bill C-13, which will support the economy in my riding of Okanagan—Coquihalla.

● (1305)

**Ms. Jinny Jogindera Sims (Newton—North Delta, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I acknowledge the very passionate speech made by my colleague from British Columbia.

At the same time, I am rising today because I am hearing from the business community in Newton—North Delta, which is a very large section of that riding, that more breaks are needed for small- and medium-size businesses. We know that small- and medium-size businesses are the backbone of our economy. They create jobs that remain in our communities and that also add to the wealth and diversity of our nation.

I know there is a temporary tax credit for small- and medium-size businesses. However, what else is in this plan to help small- and medium-size businesses create jobs that will stay in Canada and help sustain our communities right across the nation?

**Mr. Dan Albas:** Mr. Speaker, simply put, the government has taken more action to help small business and has been doing so since taking office in 2006. In this particular budget it is providing a temporary hiring credit for small business to encourage that additional hiring.

All our members are thinking about the economy. We are focused on jobs and economic growth. We are listening to people, such as those from the Canadian Federation of Independent Business, who are solidly behind us because they know it is the right thing for our economy and for Canada.

I call upon my hon. colleague to support this measure and all of the measures in our budget.

● (1310)

**Mr. Parm Gill (Brampton—Springdale, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his passionate speech as well as his hard work on behalf of his constituents.

There is also a very large manufacturing base in my riding where I am hearing a lot of positive feedback from businesses, especially with regard to the accelerated capital allowance.

For those businesses as well as the members in the House who may not be fully aware, I would appreciate if the member would elaborate on what it would do and how it would benefit small business.

**Mr. Dan Albas:** Mr. Speaker, there are a number of particulars in Bill C-13 that we can all support.

A temporary hiring credit for small business would encourage additional hiring. Right now businesses are in a state of uncertainty. They read things in the newspaper. We want to encourage them to hire new people by reducing those costs. By reducing those costs we give them more certainty which allows them to expand their business, which could be by getting more sales or providing better service.

Going back to the accelerated manufacturing credit, I would also mention that it is those kinds of business decisions that we want to encourage where they can buy that new equipment, such as a big master planer. We want to ensure that businesses feel encouraged that now is the time to be supporting economic growth and getting those jobs.

**Mr. Scott Simms (Bonaville—Gander—Grand Falls—Windor, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, thanks to technology I was able to find on Google the company Structurlam, which the member mentioned. It looks like quite a company and is the type that will do well in the future.

He talked about the accelerated capital cost allowance and how it would allow companies like that to purchase larger machinery. However, does he not fear that the decreasing dollar value, now hovering closer to 90¢, would wipe out a lot of the credits and benefits that may ensue from the government's budget?

**Mr. Dan Albas:** Mr. Speaker, basically we have a business environment where on long-term expenditures, such as purchasing such big master planers or whatnot, it is important to send the right signal now. We are saying we support jobs and economic growth. We support and encourage those businesses to meet those challenges. There will always be challenges. However, this government stands behind big and small businesses no matter where they are in Canada.

[Translation]

**Mr. Rodger Cuzner (Cape Breton—Canso, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I will be sharing my time with the hon. member for Bonaville—Gander—Grand Falls—Windor, a lovely riding.



*Government Orders*

[English]

I will change course a bit. The last two members spoke at length about what this budget does for big business and corporations in Canada. Certainly we in the Liberal Party understand fully that one of the greatest things a Canadian can have is a job. It is important that our corporations are strong and our small business owners do well. Those initiatives are important but we cannot do that in isolation. We have seen what happens with trickle-down investments. Very rarely do those in need in this country reap any type of benefit.

In 2007, 9.2% of the population was living in poverty. Now almost 10% of the population is living close to the poverty line. Therefore, I will focus my comments today on those who do not have a voice, those I have not heard mentioned throughout this debate and those not mentioned in the chamber.

Before I begin my comments on poverty, I want to speak specifically about some of the closures of Service Canada and EI processing centres that are taking place across the country. There are 600 people processing EI applications now who will be sent home over the next number of months. Conservatives talk about investing in rural communities. This action by the government will take jobs out of rural Canada and consolidate them into fewer positions. However, those positions that will be maintained will be moved into centres that have very low unemployment rates.

I point specifically to three cases where the government centralized jobs. In Gander, Corner Brook and Happy Valley-Goose Bay where the unemployment rate is 17%, the jobs are being moved to St. John's where the unemployment rate is under 6%. In Edmundston, Campbellton and Bathurst where the unemployment rate fluctuates anywhere from 11% to 15%, the jobs are being moved to Moncton where the unemployment rate is under 7%. Finally, in Sydney where the unemployment rate is over 16%, a number of jobs are being moved to Halifax where the unemployment rate is under 6%. It makes no sense at all.

When questioned in the House on this, the Minister of Human Resources and Skills Development came back with the line that they were temporary jobs created with the economic action plan. That is absolute hogwash. That is misinformation provided on the part of the minister. There are 70 employees at the call centre in Glace Bay, which has been operating for well over 25 years, where 50 are permanent and 20 are term. Those term employees were all employed prior to the economic action plan.

The part that makes no sense at all is that the government is trimming these jobs when we know we are on the cusp of another economic downturn. We have seen the increase in the unemployment rates, which we know will continue to grow. What will then happen is as more people are unemployed, they will file for benefits. When they contact the employment insurance office there will be fewer bodies to handle the calls which will create more of a backlog. That is unacceptable.

In 2006, 80% of calls were handled within the three minute work standard for responding to telephone inquiries at EI call centres. As we speak, that percentage has gone from 80% to 32%. Calls are being dropped. People are phoning to ask where their EI cheques are

and wondering when the next bit of money will be coming in to buy groceries, diapers or whatever it might be to help keep that household running. They are having to call back 10, 15 or 20 times before they get an agent.

● (1315)

These are the most vulnerable in our society. These are people who have the toughest time working from paycheck to paycheck and there is no mention of that in this budget. That is unacceptable.

The budget is 642 pages long and the word "poverty" comes up twice. The government sees poverty as a spending issue. Most Canadians see it as an investment issue. Certainly the people on this side of the House see it as an investment issue and the government has missed the target completely with the initiatives taken in this budget.

There are a couple of glossy things in the budget. Conservatives throw a couple of nuggets in it. It is like a bouquet of thorns with a couple of roses thrown in for good measure. Where I have concern is in the totality of the budget, that it does not do enough for Canadians who are up against it and will continue to be as we go forward.

I want to bring to the attention of every member in the House a study which has just been done on poverty. Senator Art Eggleton did an exceptional study entitled "In From the Margins: A Call to Action on Poverty, Housing and Homelessness" on initiatives that could be pursued by the government in order to address poverty.

The Standing Committee on Human Resources and Skills Development embarked on a three-year study on poverty. Former NDPer Tony Martin did a lot of work on it. My great friend from Dartmouth Coal Harbour, Mike Savage, put a lot of time on it. It was an excellent report that went forward to the government which pretty much dismissed it. The government is motivated by dollars and cents.

That is why I want to bring to the attention of members, especially those on the other side of the chamber, to the National Council of Welfare report which is a branch of the government. The study it just completed is entitled "The Dollars and Sense of Solving Poverty". I am sure it will be distributed to all members, but I encourage them to take a look at it. It is a great study and talks about an investment model going forward to deal with some of the aspects of poverty.

Some of the anecdotal comments in the report highlight a couple of very obvious things. They make a great deal of sense. It talks about housing and investing in housing. If people do not have a place to live, or continue to find themselves in unacceptable housing conditions, if they are worried about whether they and their children are going to have a roof over their heads, that drifts into their physical health, their mental health and emotional well-being, but certainly their physical health as well. If people are sick and do not have a safe place to live, how are they able to focus on getting healthy again? Housing relates to costs on the health care system.

### *Government Orders*

The study indicates that 20% of the cost of our health care system is attributed to socio-economic factors. If child care spaces are not available, how does a single mom take a job if she does not know what she is going to do with her children? If we have citizens who are engaged in the economy, if a single mother is able to go to school, or able to take a job, that is what we as legislators want to do. We want to ensure that those opportunities are there and the assets are in place so people can become contributing citizens within this great country.

The government has missed an opportunity in this budget. What scares me is that with the justice bills, things are going to get tougher on those who need help the most.

• (1320)

**Mr. Bev Shipley (Lambton—Kent—Middlesex, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I thank my robust colleague across the way for his comments.

The member was talking about those who are being disadvantaged. In fact, we have done more for poverty-stricken and low income individuals in Canada.

Let us talk about the new veterans charter. When the Liberals were in government, they did none of these things to help our veterans who were sometimes up against the wall. There are now disability awards to recognize veterans' pain, suffering and injury of \$800 to \$285,000. As well, with the earnings lost benefit, income replacement while in rehabilitation, 75% have seen a minimum of \$40,000, and, in fact, the top part is non-taxable. Also, the amount for death benefits was not as high as it is now at \$285,000, which is non-taxable.

I list just a couple of things the government has done so far. I would not mind my colleague's response and hope that he would support it.

• (1325)

**Mr. Rodger Cuzner:** Mr. Speaker, one thing is for sure, it does not matter whether a member supports it or not, we know that the government would ram it through anyway. We know we are going to be force-fed here for the next four years.

I hold a great deal of respect for the member, and I listened as he stated his case on some of the boutique tax reductions. The government sort of has a buffet table of tax reductions; however, one must drill down to get into the actual aspects of it.

The government did a pretty good thing with the tax credit for volunteer firefighters, but it is a non-refundable tax credit. Those who are under a certain annual income would not be able to receive it. Therefore, there are some guys on the fire department who receive it and some who do not. It is not fair. It is not bad for some, but not for all. We see that with the family caregiver tax credit as well. These boutique tax cuts have a varying impact in the community.

[Translation]

**Mr. Denis Blanchette (Louis-Hébert, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the hon. member for his speech, in which he spoke about the most vulnerable members of our society. I would like to ask him a question about the budget approach. He mentioned that it was the combination of all the small measures that created one

big document. How does he think we could remodel this budget in the current economic context?

[English]

**Mr. Rodger Cuzner:** Mr. Speaker, there is some piecemeal effort here, but we have seen programs before. Some past governments have done good things. We know where the level of poverty for seniors was in the 1960s and that it is considerably less now. We have seen programs like CPP and the guaranteed income supplement and, just by chance, they were Liberal initiatives. However, I am sure the opposition of the day supported that.

Good things can be done, but we have certainly not seen an attempt or any effort through this budget to even address poverty. Like I said, within the 640-odd pages of the budget, poverty is mentioned twice. We recognize that it is not a priority with the current government. We recognize that the poor in this country and those who find themselves close to the poverty line are on their own for the next four years.

**Mr. Scott Simms (Bonaville—Gander—Grand Falls—Windsor, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my hon. colleague from Cape Breton—Canso for generously sharing his time with me. I want to just add to his speech.

One element of his speech that I found should be brought up in the House once again is the measure by which jobs are to be put into efficiency mode. In other words, they are being shifted around and moved to places when in fact it is a cloak and dagger way to eliminate positions within the most vulnerable communities. In my riding in Newfoundland and Labrador, I have 195 communities and in one of those larger communities, Gander, it is losing 30 positions or more. They are moving to an area of lower unemployment and the excuses that come out boggle the mind.

The advent of technology has put us in a place where people can do their job in certain areas and they do not have to be centred around a particular building or group of people. It is a remote way of connecting. I heard one of the other members from the government talking about the wonderful broadband Internet strategy. As I mentioned, I have 195 communities in my riding and 65 of them do not have access to broadband Internet. It is like a community that has no access to even get in there. It is not good for business, it is not good for all these credits that the Conservatives are promising, as my colleague points out, these boutique tax credits. It means very little if they set up in a place that does not have access to broadband Internet and certainly some of the basic resources.

I want to move on to some of the measures that are contained within this budget and some of the stuff we find is a promising gesture. However, the promising gesture does not come to fruition. It does not come to its logical conclusion to allow those in poverty to be brought out of poverty and I can think of many examples such as the tax credits regarding the family, the volunteer firefighters and others. Because these tax credits are non-refundable, the lowest end of the poverty scale does not benefit from them. That is unfortunate because, in a big way, that is what these tax credits are for. That is probably the largest part of the population that would benefit the most from this. It is rather disingenuous when they play with these numbers and they do not explore the stories that exist behind them.



*Government Orders*

When the Conservatives reduced the GST by two points several years ago, I remember how they bragged about saving money for so many impoverished people. However, the story we do not hear is that the real beneficiary of a two-point cut in the GST was a person buying a home valued over \$300,000 or buying a car that is valued over \$20,000 or \$25,000. The person who goes day to day scraping by, trying to get enough money to pay an electricity bill was not the biggest beneficiary of a 2% cut to the GST. Look what that did to the treasury itself.

So in the estimation of the government, it might be tax cutting that benefits the most vulnerable but it is not. If the government wants to brag about the tax cutting measures that it has for protecting elements of society like the upper class, the upper middle class or businesses, then it should say so.

My biggest problem with the particular government is not so much the thrust of its policy as it is the salesmanship behind it. In regard to something that was announced several months ago but now has been re-announced, but that is a whole other issue, the government will say that it will offer this brand new tax credit for small business that is taxed itself. The other issue is that, come January, there will be that increase or, so as not to offend the treasury, a modest increase in the EI premiums. It is a typical example of "I will give you this and while you aren't looking I'll take from here". It shows up in the copyright legislation that we are about to debate but I will leave that for another day.

It is unfortunate because we are now in the middle of time allotment because the Conservatives have cut down on the debate in this House.

• (1330)

Let us face it, we are paid fairly well to be in the House, yet we cannot have this conversation. We cannot have this discussion among ourselves from all different regions of this country to find out what these measures will mean.

The median income in my riding is among the lowest in the country. It is not the lowest, but it is pretty close. Therefore, the message from people in my particular area would be that they do not benefit from this particular tax credit. Would it not be advantageous to have a refundable tax credit, so that someone who is on a lower income would get the benefit by way of a refund?

It would not be income tested. It would not be based on an individual's particular income. This cuts across a wide array of these boutique tax credits, as my hon. colleague from Cape Breton points out, and quite rightly.

I do find that some of the matters that are not being discussed here are of great importance. Now that we have a majority government in place for the next four or five years, it is an opportunity for us to have a good, long discussion that is broad in scope on pension security.

Pension security will be one of those issues that will come back to haunt us several years down the road, and somebody will look back at us and say that at this particular moment, we did not really discuss what was most important. That is unfortunate.

I am not wholeheartedly against corporate tax cuts. I do believe, in many instances, that they do exactly what the government says. I do not think they are altruistic. I am not one of those people who blindly believes that any corporate tax credit will go directly toward creating new jobs. Corporations have shareholders; they want their returns, and they want a nice return. A lot of their shareholders include many of our seniors and the like, and there is nothing wrong with that. However, let us not expect a corporate tax credit to dig us out of levels of poverty at a time when we cannot really afford it.

I look at corporate tax credits and then I look at millions of dollars put into the F-35 jets. I am not one to turn down more resources for the Canadian military, but what about search and rescue? Where does that line up? It is a priority issue that we debate in the House, and unfortunately, every time we try to debate it, the debate gets shortened.

There are some good, concrete measures within the budget and within other pieces of legislation. There, I admit it.

Some are way too modest to make a difference. The CLC credited the government by saying it was a modest increase in the guaranteed income supplement for our most vulnerable seniors. Of course it is a modest one. It could have been doubled. Numbers from many think tanks and many corners of this country say that if we had doubled that amount of money, from a \$300 million to a \$700 million investment, it could have brought many more people above that poverty line.

Let us bear in mind that a lot of people in my area depend on the government for their sole source of income: a combination of CPP, old age security and the guaranteed income supplement. These are people who have larger homes, and that is the only income they have. Winter is coming, and, as we all know, oil is not particularly cheap these days, and has not been for the past five to 10 years.

I would look at this debate as a way of saying yes to this and more of that. Instead of a vote of no, it is a question of saying that the government can do a lot better. The people demand of not only the government but of us as individual MPs that we reflect the opinions of our ridings that it can be done better.

• (1335)

**Mr. Scott Andrews (Avalon, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, my colleague from Newfoundland talks about how the government gives us this and takes it away from us here.

It is quite true. I get a lot of inquiries from seniors. The government gives them an increase on their CPP in January, and then it claws it back on their GIS in July.

The Conservatives think they are doing great things for seniors, yet seniors are not getting the money they deserve. I wonder if the member would like to comment on that.

**Mr. Scott Simms:** Mr. Speaker, one of the things the member talks about, and we get a lot of calls about this, is that when there is that modest increase in CPP, there is a decrease in the old age security. We have to look at this.

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Another example is that a lot of seniors out there will take money out of their RRSPs. When they do that, what ends up happening is a decrease in their old age security, their basic income from the government, which they have invested in for the past 40 years of their lives. Therefore, the RRSP is not the vehicle they wanted it to be. The investment that was there is no longer there, simply because of government regulation.

When it comes to pension security, my hon. colleague is right: it is a lot of giving and taking back. That can be fixed by having the discussion here and over the next three years.

• (1340)

**Mr. Rodger Cuzner (Cape Breton—Canso, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to further elaborate on that exact point of the government giving with one hand and taking back with the other hand.

We are all aware that in January the government is going to increase payroll taxes by 5.6%. Any small business operator in this country fully understands that payroll taxes are job-killing taxes. The government is going to introduce that increase, but it is saying in the budget is that it is going to give it back with the other hand. It is going to have a hiring credit for small business to a maximum of \$1,000. That credit is going to be taxable. CRA has said it is going to tax it.

Up front there is going to be the additional payroll tax, and there is going to be this other tax credit, but it is going to be taken back. The government is sort of taking it back twice. It is unprecedented for the government to be taking the money back twice, but the government will stand up, take a bow and pat itself on the back for all the great things that it does.

Does my colleague see that it is imperative that we as an opposition stand up and make Canadians aware that there is a shell game going on over there that has never been seen before in this country? It is smoke and mirrors about the help that is on its way. The government is taking it back with the other hand.

Does my colleague see that we have to take this message to Canadians?

**Mr. Scott Simms:** Mr. Speaker, I think the member is a little frustrated, as we all are.

I would have to say that in this particular situation the member is right. In some cases the government will actually take it back twice, only to provide a benefit in the future, so it goes here, it goes there. It is here and there. It is like the Cirque du Soleil of fiscal policy. It goes up and it goes down, and it never stops.

Unfortunately, that is the problem of the salesmanship in all these boutique tax credits out there. The problem is that the most vulnerable are not going to be assisted by it, even though the government says that they will be.

It is a government numbers games, saying  $x$  numbers of people will actually benefit from this particular tax cut, but in fact they are not the most vulnerable, as the government claims, and unfortunately this little shell game, as my hon. colleague points out, will continue on other measures. It is like going to the store and seeing what we

want in the window, but by the time we get to the cash register, it is an entirely different piece of policy. That is unfortunate.

**Mr. Rob Clarke (Desnethé—Missinippi—Churchill River, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I will be sharing my time with my fine colleague from Kildonan—St. Paul.

I am pleased to rise on behalf of my constituents and to speak with my colleagues about the next phase of Canada's economic action plan. The legislation introduced by our Minister of Finance, Bill C-13 is a key element in the next phase of Canada's economic action plan.

We made a promise to Canadians to focus on the economy and to continue to deliver new jobs and strong economic growth.

With the excellent leadership of Prime Minister Stephen Harper and Minister Flaherty, this Conservative government—

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Barry Devolin):** Order. I would like to remind this hon. member and all others that it is inappropriate to use the given names of other members of this House while in the chamber. He can refer to them by their ridings or by their titles, but not by their given names.

**Mr. Rob Clarke:** I do apologize, Mr. Speaker.

The Prime Minister and the Minister of Finance and this Conservative government have cemented the strongest job growth in the G7. Since July 2009 we have created nearly 600,000 new net jobs. This is a result that our government can hang its hat on.

The International Monetary Fund projects that Canada will continue to be one of the strongest nations in the G7 over the next two years. While we appreciate that claim, it does not mean that Canada is protected from the global economic turbulence it is now facing. That is why our government is moving forward with, and implementing, the next phase of Canada's economic action plan.

One of my favourite features of Bill C-13, and one which would help my constituents tremendously, is the forgiving of loans for new doctors and nurses in rural and remote areas. This excellent program will help make access to quality health care in my riding and across Canada easier. It will create jobs in the riding and also support numerous communities in my riding.

Another example of our government helping communities and the excellent volunteers within them is the introduction of the volunteer firefighters tax credit. I know from my own experience serving in the RCMP what it was like to be in the line of duty and see volunteer firefighters at motor vehicle accidents. These are the individuals who put their lives on the line every day just for a simple thanks.

These individuals not only serve in the line of duty but do so as volunteers. These volunteer firefighters are hard-working taxpaying Canadians. This tax credit would help ease the burden in these difficult economic times. Nearly 85,000 volunteer firefighters provide their services to protect the lives and property of Canadians living in communities across Canada. I greatly respect the work that they do.



As a result of our Conservative government, families are now able to enrol their children in artistic, cultural, recreational and sporting activities. This is great, and with a young family myself, I know the value and results that this brings. Youth stay active and their minds are challenged. It keeps them working hard for their future endeavours so they can contribute to the Canadian economy in years to come.

We are also investing in education by helping apprentices in the skilled trades or workers in regulated professions by making their occupational or professional examination fees eligible for the tuition tax credit.

These are excellent policies that will improve the lives and livelihoods of all Canadians.

Bill C-13 also has excellent measures for supporting Canada's forestry industry, something that is very important for my constituents.

By extending the powers of Export Development Canada to provide financing support to Canadian forestry companies, we have created new jobs and growth. In fact, a new mill is opening in Big River in northern Saskatchewan, and it will provide over 100 new jobs in the reforestation and transportation fields and also in the sawmill process. By extending the enhanced work sharing program to assist forestry employers, we have protected those forestry jobs that were at risk.

Another excellent initiative that helps my riding is the mineral exploration tax credit.

The Canadian mining industry is very important to my riding in northern Saskatchewan. There are numerous mines, and they employ thousands of people. In fact, 300,000 Canadians are employed in the mining industry today. This industry promotes economic stability and growth in the many rural towns and first nations and Métis communities in my riding.

I am very proud to be a part of the Conservative government. We are leading the way on the world stage on how to manage the economy effectively through this dangerous recession.

It is no wonder Canada is the envy of the world.

Our Conservative government set out on a mission to provide stability and growth in these troubled economic times while keeping taxes low, and we have accomplished that.

I would like to quote from Warren Jestin, the chief economist at Scotiabank, who pointed out in the *Daily Commercial News and Construction Record* on September 27 that "Canada is the best place to be and almost everything I look at screams that out to me."

• (1345)

We cut taxes over 120 times since 2006. This has resulted in the overall tax burden being at the lowest level in nearly 50 years. We reduced the GST, as it was pointed out, from 7% to 5%. We provided seniors with pension income splitting. We introduced a child fitness tax credit. We cut the personal tax rate to 15%, the lowest it has ever been, and we introduced a children's arts and tax credit. This has resulted in a total savings of over \$3,000 for the average Canadian

### *Government Orders*

family. That is \$3,000 back in their pockets. These are results that all Canadians can be proud of.

The number one issue for this government is getting people back to work, which will help the communities and the country grow.

Today's bill announces measures that would encourage hiring and provide additional financial support to Canadian workers and families during the recovery, including a temporary hiring credit for small businesses of up to \$1,000 against small employer increases in their 2011 EI premiums over those paid in 2010.

Today's bill also proposes \$4.5 million annually to expand the wage earners' protection program to cover employees who lose their jobs when their employer's attempt at restructuring takes longer than six months, is unsuccessful and ends in bankruptcy or receivership.

In conclusion, Canadians gave our Conservative government the mandate to continue to lead the way on the world stage. I am here to tell members that we will continue to lead the way and Bill C-13 is the way forward for this country.

• (1350)

**Mr. Scott Simms (Bonavista—Gander—Grand Falls—Windsor, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, for this entire fishing season on the east coast of Newfoundland and Labrador, we have a shrimp plant that has not been working in quite some time. We are looking at a couple hundred people affected by this closure over this season and, for a lot of them, the benefits they received from employment insurance have now diminished.

I wonder if the hon. member would help me address how the economic action plan would help those people when I meet them soon.

**Mr. Rob Clarke:** Mr. Speaker, I, too, have, in northern Saskatchewan, freshwater fishing. What this government is doing is lowering taxes to help small businesses get back on their feet and to give them an opportunity to start hiring more people. That is why we have more people and why we are looking at further negotiations in the world free trade agreements. There are 50 new ones in negotiations right now. These will promote fishing—

**Hon. Jim Karygiannis:** You're drinking our own Kool-Aid.

**Mr. Rob Clarke:** Mr. Speaker, hopefully the member can go back and say to those people that this government is working hard to promote industry, all industries, from fishing, wild berries harvesting—

**Hon. Jim Karygiannis:** You have to be kidding.

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux:** That would be lying on your part.

*Statements by Members*

**Ms. Niki Ashton (Churchill, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, given that my colleague represents a constituency similar in many ways to the one I have the honour of representing, I would like to hear his thoughts on why, in the government's economic plan, we have not seen the priority put on first nations and the needs that first nations have in our regions in northern Canada, whether it is in terms of housing, funding for education or, quite frankly, a real commitment to economic development in some of the communities where the highest rates of poverty exist in our country.

Given that reality is so critical in our part of the country, I would very much like to hear his thoughts on why his government has been negligent on all of those priorities.

**Mr. Rob Clarke:** Mr. Speaker, as I earlier said, forestry and mining are very important in my riding. Those communities across northern Saskatchewan deal every day with those industries. Many first nations people are employed there. Many Métis are employed there. Many non-aboriginals are also employed there. We have people coming from Newfoundland and Labrador to Fort McMurray for employment. We have people coming from Ontario to northern Saskatchewan to work at the uranium mines. That is why we have invested over \$1 billion just in the forestry alone for the pulp and paper and green transformation program. That promotes economic stimulus for northern Saskatchewan, as well. We have provided millions of dollars to the mining industry in order to promote job growth.

**Mr. LaVar Payne (Medicine Hat, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I was listening to one of my colleagues on the Liberal side talk about a shell game. I was quite intrigued by that comment because it is my understanding that the biggest shell game that ever happened was the \$40 million that were distributed in brown envelopes. However, that is not my question.

I would ask the member to touch a bit on the capital cost allowance that our government is instituting in this bill.

• (1355)

**Mr. Rob Clarke:** Mr. Speaker, we have cut taxes by \$120 million since 2006. We have taken one million low-income families, individuals and seniors off the tax rolls altogether, which is very important. We have cut taxes in every way. We cut personal taxes, consumption taxes, business taxes, excise taxes and much more. This includes cutting the personal income tax to 15%.

Wherever we can, we are working to lower the tax burden on Canadian families, as well as on small business in order to promote more business in Canada.

**Mrs. Joy Smith (Kildonan—St. Paul, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to stand today in support of the budget implementation bill, Bill C-13. The bill has been debated for a very long time. It was initially tabled in the House on March 22, and today we are dealing with the implementation of the second phase of that bill.

What has happened since we started this discussion? Not only was it debated in the House, not only did it go to committee for a thorough examination and not only did it come back to the House, but we had an election. During that election, I think every member went door to door and talked about the budget. What happened in the end? The Conservatives have a majority government. Why? It is

because Canadians said that this government would take care of the economy in this country.

Why were Canadians worried about that? They were worried because there was a disaster in Haiti, a disaster in Japan and a disaster in Iceland where two volcanoes erupted and caused a lot of problems with air quality and things like that. During those disasters, Canada generously participated to help communities and it kept a close eye on what was happening on our economic home front.

The Prime Minister has taken an amazing leadership role. Canada is known as the country with the most economic stability in the world at this point in time. It is not just this side of the House saying that. Many well-known companies, organizations and third parties have said that. Canada has the strongest job growth record in the G7.

What has happened because of this good planning? Six hundred thousand new jobs have been created and Canada's people are working. That is incredible.

The International Monetary Fund is forecasting that Canada will have the strongest overall economic growth in the G7 over the next two years. That is why we need to pass the second phase of this budget implementation bill and allow the economy to grow. Many wonderful things are happening and Canada is in a stable situation. Why? It is because our Prime Minister and the caucus have put together an economic plan that is good for Canada, Canadians, families and seniors.

Canada has the lowest total government net debt to GDP ratio in the G7, which is something to be proud of. We will get the deficit under control. There is a plan to do that.

The World Economic Forum ranks Canada's financial system as the soundest in the world for the fourth consecutive year. That is amazing in this global downturn. Moody's is renewing Canada's triple A credit rating due to our economic resilience. There is very high government financial strength. The world is saying that it is looking to Canada as a leader. As the prime minister of England said, "this is Canada's year". This is Canada's year because of the leadership.

• (1400)

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Barry Devolin):** Order, please. I must interrupt the hon. member for Kildonan—St. Paul at this point to move on to statements by members. When the House returns to this matter she will have six minutes remaining in her speech.

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## STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

[Translation]

### LOUISEVILLE BUCKWHEAT PANCAKE FESTIVAL

**Ms. Ruth Ellen Brosseau (Berthier—Maskinongé, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to draw attention to an important event in my riding.



The Louiseville Buckwheat Pancake Festival began on September 30 and will run until October 9. This festival has become a community fixture over its 33-year history, and I would like to highlight the work of its numerous volunteers. Louiseville has been officially recognized as buckwheat country, which goes to show how important this festival is. The people of Berthier—Maskinongé are proud of their history and traditions. The area knows how to showcase its culture and local products.

Along with the festival's organizers and the people of Berthier—Maskinongé, I would like to invite the public to come celebrate with us and take part in the cultural, social and gastronomic activities that are taking place in Louiseville.

\* \* \*

[English]

## JUSTICE

**Mr. Kevin Sorenson (Crowfoot, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, my constituents know that, while restorative justice approaches complement other criminal justice system responses to criminal behaviour, they are not intended to replace them.

That is why we are strengthening our laws, investing in crime prevention and increasing police presence on our streets. At the same time, we are respecting the rights of the accused, but we recognize that the rights of the criminals should not take precedence over victims and community safety.

This is one of the reasons that our legislation to crack down on child sex offenders and those who would deal drugs to youth has such widespread support among victims and our communities.

We have doubled the budget of the National Crime Prevention Centre and emphasized programming to help youth at risk. We created the youth gang prevention fund and increased its funding.

Canadians can count on us to keep their communities and streets safe and to stand up for victims.

It is about time the opposition supported victims and stopped obstructing our legislation.

\* \* \*

## HOLOCAUST REMEMBRANCE DAY

**Hon. Irwin Cotler (Mount Royal, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, 70 years ago, in one of the worst and horrific atrocities of the Holocaust, 33,731 Jews were murdered in just two days at Babi Yar, an unspeakable horror too terrible to be believed, but not too terrible to have happened.

For 50 years, the fact that the murdered men, women and children were Jews was not even acknowledged, their identities simply erased, effectively killing the victims yet again.

It is with and because of the remnant of survivors in my constituency, as in the Ukraine and elsewhere, that we remember that each murdered person had an identity, that each was a universe and that we promise that never again will we be indifferent to racism and hate. Never again will we be silent in the face of evil. Never again will we be indulgent to anti-Semitism and mass atrocity anywhere.

## Statements by Members

May Babi Yar not be just an act of remembrance, which it is, but let it be a remembrance to act, which it must be.

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## THE ENVIRONMENT

**Mr. Robert Sopuck (Dauphin—Swan River—Marquette, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, Canada's oil sands and energy sector drive the Canadian economy. The benefits for Canadian families and workers are simply overwhelming.

The Keystone pipeline and northern gateway project will help power our economy and deliver jobs for Canadian working families.

Employment resulting from these projects is expected to reach 1.6 million jobs by 2035. In the next 25 years, the effect on Canada's GDP will be over \$2 trillion, according to the Canadian Energy Research Institute.

By 2035, the investments and revenues from the oil sands will be close to \$5 trillion. Canada's working men and women will receive \$1.5 trillion in wages as a result of oil sands investment during this time.

The economy and jobs is our government's top priority and Canada has some of the strongest environmental standards in the world.

Therefore, why is the NDP working with environmental extremists who want to destroy the livelihoods of thousands of Canadians who work in the oil sands and live from coast to coast to coast?

\* \* \*

● (1405)

## DARTMOUTH—COLE HARBOUR

**Mr. Robert Chisholm (Dartmouth—Cole Harbour, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, there is a buzz in Dartmouth—Cole Harbour right now. There is hope and optimism about our future. Companies are moving from Toronto to Dartmouth excited by the great potential they see. There are amazing new developments happening on the waterfront, bringing people and vitality to our beautiful harbour.

Excitement is building about a successful contract bid from our shipyards. In fact, Nova Scotia Community College just expanded its world-class metal fabrication program. People are talking, taking action and working hard to make life in Dartmouth—Cole Harbour better for themselves and others.

That is not to say that we do not have challenges in Dartmouth—Cole Harbour. We do. There is clearly much work to be done and there is much that the government could do to help if it were able to listen and not be so out of touch.

Despite these issues, despite the challenges and despite the lack of progressive vision and compassionate leadership from the government, Dartmouth—Cole Harbour is growing stronger. We are making a name for ourselves and it is the people of my constituency who should be applauded for that. This—

**The Speaker:** Order, please. The hon. member for Kildonan—St. Paul.

*Statements by Members***GUINNESS WORLD RECORD**

**Mrs. Joy Smith (Kildonan—St. Paul, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise today to pay tribute to Arvid Loewen, a constituent from my riding of Kildonan—St. Paul, who has spent much of his life contributing to young people and families in our community. In 2006 Arvid resigned from his job to become a full time volunteer ambassador for the Mully Children's Family, a non-profit organization in Kenya that rescues and cares for vulnerable, at risk children. To date, Mully Children's Family has helped over 7,000 children.

This past summer, Arvid, a 54-year-old grandfather of three, decided to cycle across Canada to raise awareness and funds for the children in Kenya and challenge the standing Guinness world record. Arvid began his grueling journey in Vancouver on July 1, 2011, cycling 22 hours a day and sleeping only 2 hours a night. Thirteen days, 16 hours and 13 minutes later, Arvid arrived in Halifax, setting a new Guinness world record.

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**FORMER MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT FOR LETHBRIDGE**

**Mr. Jim Hillyer (Lethbridge, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, tomorrow southern Albertans and many members and former members of the House will come to my riding in Lethbridge to celebrate the selfless career of over 30 years of public service of my predecessor and mentor, the Hon. Rick Casson. He came to Parliament in 1997 and worked tirelessly to provide a strong conservative voice for southern Alberta for 14 years. I am honoured that they have put their trust in me to do the same.

As chair of the defence committee, Mr. Casson was a genuine champion for the men and women in uniform and military veterans, particularly for those who served and sacrificed in Afghanistan.

Finally, it would be appropriate to acknowledge the 12 members of the House who have served in the military, including the member for Pickering—Scarborough East who sits two seats to my right, who served a tour of duty in Afghanistan in 2007.

I would like to thank these colleagues for a lifetime of service to our great country.

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[Translation]

**ORGANIZATION FOR SINGLE PARENTS**

**Mr. Raymond Côté (Beauport—Limoilou, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, last Sunday I had the pleasure of attending the 25th anniversary celebrations of Sources Vives, an organization serving Beauport, Côte-de-Beaupré, Île d'Orléans and Sainte-Brigitte-de-Laval. The organization was founded by single parents, both men and women, in order to bring people together and provide support for anyone in that situation or going through a separation.

The many services offered by this organization help to put an end to isolation, enhance families and cultivate positive attitudes. Thus, it has a special place in the community.

In closing, I wish to commend all the administrators and volunteers for their initiative and the success of the organization, and I wish them all the best in their future endeavours.

[English]

**VETERANS**

**Mr. Greg Kerr (West Nova, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, when the New Veterans Charter was introduced, our Conservative government promised Canada's veterans that it would be a living document, and we kept our promise. This week, the enhancements to the New Veterans Charter came into force. Through these enhancements, we are providing improved care and financial assistance, an enhanced earnings loss benefit and options for disability award payments.

Canada's veterans requested changes to the New Veterans Charter and we responded.

Enhancements to the New Veterans Charter are just one way in which the Conservative government is working to provide our veterans and their families the support they need. We must never forget the wonderful contribution these great Canadians have made to our country.

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● (1410)

[Translation]

**AFFORDABLE SOCIAL HOUSING**

**Mr. Tyrone Benskin (Jeanne-Le Ber, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, the state of affordable social housing in this country is pitiful. The various affordable social housing programs administered by the federal government provide residents with inadequate basic living conditions and ignore those who need specialized services or who have physical limitations.

This government should do more to support affordable social housing.

[English]

In this time of austerity we must never forget that social housing is not wasted money. It is a sound economic investment. The more we do to help those who are most in need, the faster they will be able to find their own footing and participate in and contribute to Canada's economy. By helping people with basics, such as a base from which they can begin to build, we can help them turn their lives around.

Everyone has trouble making ends meet at some point. I encourage the government, on behalf of my constituency, to make a true investment in Canada. I challenge the government to see that economic prosperity is not only banks and multinationals, but about the people of Canada and especially those that need our help from time to time.

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**THE ECONOMY**

**Mr. Chungsen Leung (Willowdale, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, our government's top priority remains on completing the economic recovery. Canadians gave our Conservative government a strong mandate to stay focused on what matters: creating jobs and economic growth.



Canada has now created nearly 600,000 net new jobs since January 2009. We are the only G7 country that has regained more than all of the output and the jobs lost during the downturn.

We are not immune to the volatile global economic environment, largely due to problems of confidence in the efforts of governments to reduce their deficits. This is why our government is staying the course with our low tax plan to create jobs and growth. The last thing the Canadian economy needs is a massive NDP tax hike that would kill jobs, stall our recovery and set Canadian families back.

The next phase of the Canadian economic action plan will preserve our country's advantage in the global economy.

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### MULTICULTURALISM

**Hon. Jim Karygiannis (Scarborough—Agincourt, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, on October 8, 1971, Prime Minister Pierre Elliott Trudeau introduced multiculturalism. Canadian multiculturalism represents the belief that no matter where one comes from or how long one has been in Canada, once the oath of citizenship is taken, one is a Canadian.

For too long political parties have relied on ethnic or cultural groups to vote for them. It is time that we integrate multicultural communities as full partners in the decision-making process of Canada. We need to ensure that all Canadians are fully engaged in the great experiment we call Canada. Multiculturalism is alive and well in Canada and it has a rightful place in our country.

We need to respect our fellow Canadians as equals. We need to accept them as full participants in all aspects of Canadian life. We need to celebrate their full participation in our communities. We need to embrace where it will take us. We need to come together as Canadians and show the world that in Canada we are all equal parts of the human race.

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### HEALTH

**Mr. Colin Carrie (Oshawa, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, today the hon. Minister of Health announced a new approach for energy drinks, which will include maximum limits for caffeine content. The proposed maximum caffeine levels for energy drinks is part of a new way to manage these popular beverages. Parents need to have access to as much information as possible so they are able to make good decisions when it comes to what their family eats and drinks.

The popularity of energy drinks has resulted in higher levels of caffeine consumption among young people than in the past. This has caused concerned among some parents, health care providers and public health officials about potential health risks to teens and children. These new measures will not only allow Canadians to make informed decisions, they will also reduce the chances of over consumption of caffeine and other ingredients, such as vitamins.

Today's proposed changes will be especially helpful to parents of teenagers who regularly consume energy drinks.

I applaud the Minister of Health for taking this initiative. This is yet another example of how our government is committed to taking action to support Canadian families.

### Statements by Members

●(1415)

### AVIATION SAFETY

**Mr. Dennis Bevington (Western Arctic, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, on Tuesday, northerners were devastated by the fourth airplane crash in only weeks.

On Tuesday, an Air Tindi Cessna 208 crashed on a scheduled flight from Yellowknife to Lutselk'e, killing the pilot and one passenger. This crash comes only days after the funerals for two pilots killed when an Arctic Sunwest Twin Otter crashed in Yellowknife's Old town, injuring seven others. The day after that crash, a single-engine Cessna crashed near Fort Simpson. Luckily the pilot walked away.

On August 12, a First Air 737 crashed near Resolute Bay killing 12 of the 15 on board. The crew of that aircraft was based in Yellowknife.

I am sure all members of the House will stand with me to extend their condolences to the families and friends of the victims of these crashes.

For northerners, flying is something they do all the time due to the isolation of our communities. They have no other choice. Understandably, they are concerned about the safety of northern aviation.

Last year, government officials promised to beef-up transport Canada's aviation safety inspection arm. My constituents want to know if the government has kept its promises.

\* \* \*

### JUSTICE

**Mr. Brent Rathgeber (Edmonton—St. Albert, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, our Conservative government received a strong mandate to keep our streets and communities safe. That is why we are committed to a zero tolerance policy for drugs in prison.

Our government has been consistent: we must develop a correctional system that actually corrects criminal behaviour.

We reject categorically suggestions from the NDP and their soft on crime friends like the Elizabeth Fry Society that suggest: providing prisoners with needles and drugs in order to engage in harm reduction; taking drugs away from prisoners violates the Charter of Rights and Freedoms; drug interdiction methods are unfair to inmates by violating their privacy and drug sniffing dogs can scare away visitors; and, most shockingly of all, strip searches of inmates suspected of smuggling drugs or weapons is tantamount to "lawful sexual assault by the state".

*Oral Questions*

Yesterday the member for Sackville—Eastern Shore demanded that I apologize for allegedly wronging this criminal group. I suggest it is the NDP that should apologize to Canadians for its complicity in the soft on crime coalition and for refusing to stand up for victims. I call—

**The Speaker:** Order. Oral questions. The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

**ORAL QUESTIONS**

[English]

**G8 SUMMIT**

**Mrs. Nycole Turmel (Hull—Aylmer, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, the President of the Treasury Board was a no-show at a conference about freedom of information, which is not a surprise considering his track record.

He used his personal email to go undetected. He left no paper trail. His ally from Huntsville now says the paper trails and emails are a bad idea, that they should have spoken on the phone.

Does the Prime Minister realize that the minister has lost all credibility?

**Right Hon. Stephen Harper (Prime Minister, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, if this is a reference to the G8 funding, I think this has been looked at thoroughly by the Auditor General. The government has accepted those recommendations. There were 32 projects. They were all public. They all came in at or under budget, and they are all good projects for the area.

[Translation]

**Mrs. Nycole Turmel (Hull—Aylmer, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, the Auditor General said that the government violated the rules by establishing the G8 legacy fund. He did not find any evidence or explanations justifying how or why this \$50 million was spent. The minutes from municipal meetings provide us with a hint: in them, the minister says that it is the Prime Minister's Office that decides.

Can the Prime Minister explain why his office was involved in the distribution of G8 funds?

**Right Hon. Stephen Harper (Prime Minister, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, it has now been several months since the Auditor General examined this situation, and the facts have not changed. The Minister of Transport was the one who approved 32 public projects. All the money was spent fairly and all these projects were carried out under the appropriate budget. These are good projects for the riding.

• (1420)

**Mrs. Nycole Turmel (Hull—Aylmer, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, the Auditor General spoke to five departments to try to understand what happened and figure out who decided what. No one was able to provide an answer. The only answer we were able to find was in the minutes from municipal meetings, which quote the minister as saying that the budgets must first be approved by the Prime Minister's Office. That is what the minister said.

If he has nothing to hide, is the Prime Minister prepared to open his books to the Auditor General?

**Right Hon. Stephen Harper (Prime Minister, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, there is nothing new here. The Auditor General reviewed these projects several months ago now and the government accepted her recommendations.

**Mr. Alexandre Boulerice (Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, there is something new. Yesterday, the Auditor General said that he tried to obtain additional information from the President of the Treasury Board. The Auditor General just wanted some documentation explaining the decision-making process, but he came up against a brick wall. We know why: the minister was managing this budget from his riding office.

If he has nothing to hide, why is he refusing to give the Auditor General all the documentation? What is the President of the Treasury Board trying to hide?

[English]

**Hon. John Baird (Minister of Foreign Affairs, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, prior to the Auditor General writing a report, I was pleased to sit down with her and answer every question that she and her office had with respect to these infrastructure projects.

I approved 32 infrastructure projects. Every one of those infrastructure projects is for public infrastructure, for an airport, for a provincial highway, for municipal infrastructure. All 32 projects came in on or under budget.

The Auditor General has made some useful observations on how we could be even more open and more transparent to Parliament, and we have completely accepted all of her recommendations.

**Mr. Alexandre Boulerice (Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, let us be clear. It is the Muskoka minister who misled the Auditor General. After 119 days, he should explain himself.

The Auditor General said, "We received a small amount of documentation which wasn't, frankly, relevant to the question". The Auditor General also said that these were unique examples of bureaucrats being shut out.

If the minister will not stand up, will the Minister of Foreign Affairs explain why he approved these projects that broke all the rules?

**Hon. John Baird (Minister of Foreign Affairs, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, more than 23,000 public infrastructure projects were approved from coast to coast to coast at the height of the economic downturn which Canada was not immune from.

All 32 of the projects in question had contribution agreements prepared by the public service. All 32 of the projects were for public infrastructure. All 32 of the projects came in on or under budget.

At the same time, the Auditor General has made some helpful observations and helpful recommendations on how we can improve the process going forward. The government has completely accepted all of those recommendations.



## CANADA-U.S. RELATIONS

**Hon. Dominic LeBlanc (Beauséjour, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the Conservatives were missing in action when the Americans reintroduced the buy America provisions. When it came time to protect Canadians from the long arm of the IRS, the Conservatives once again let Americans treat Canadians unfairly. Now, when they are proposing to sign a perimeter security deal with the United States, why should we believe they will not fold again like a cheap suit?

If the Prime Minister did not stand up for Canadian interests in the past, why should we believe it will be different now?

**Hon. John Baird (Minister of Foreign Affairs, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister has been working very hard with President Obama to try to make the border less thick which will help the manufacturing sector and so that individuals can pass freely across the border.

We were very pleased to see the Liberal Party begin to stand up and fight for free trade. It was only 23 short years ago that every Liberal member ran in the fight of their lives to stop free trade, to try to stop more jobs, more hope and more opportunity.

I am so excited to see my friend from Beauséjour standing up and being so passionate about free trade. I congratulate him and welcome him aboard.

\* \* \*

## SEARCH AND RESCUE

**Hon. Lawrence MacAulay (Cardigan, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the government has announced it is closing search and rescue centres in Quebec City and St. John's.

Staffing and infrastructure requirements are just some of the concerns raised by departmental officials in a recently obtained internal government document which shows that the Coast Guard would have to absorb the transitional costs without any new government funding.

We are dealing with an essential service and human lives. Will the government do the right thing and reverse this reckless decision?

• (1425)

**Hon. Keith Ashfield (Minister of Fisheries and Oceans and Minister for the Atlantic Gateway, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, as I have said many times, the consolidation represents a positive change by locating all maritime and air search and rescue coordinators in the same centre working side by side.

This change does not affect the availability of resources such as Coast Guard ships or Coast Guard auxiliary and Canadian Forces aircraft.

The consolidation of the sub-centres into existing joint rescue coordination centres will have no negative impact on the current levels of service provided by the Coast Guard.

[Translation]

**Hon. Stéphane Dion (Saint-Laurent—Cartierville, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the issue is that the minister is being contradicted by his own officials. In the document obtained, they warn about the lack of

## Oral Questions

French outside Quebec City's rescue centre. I would like to read from the document in English:

[English]

"A number of senior team members have expressed doubt and concern about the success of closing MRSC Quebec et al".

[Translation]

How would the minister feel if he were in danger and had to communicate in a language he did not understand? Will he listen to his own advisers and leave the rescue centres where they are so that they can save lives?

[English]

**Hon. Keith Ashfield (Minister of Fisheries and Oceans and Minister for the Atlantic Gateway, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, many times I have indicated that bilingual capacity will be increased above the levels that are in place now both in Halifax and Trenton.

This is not an issue. There is no way we will jeopardize the safety of mariners. We will continue on course as we have been to save money and provide better efficiencies.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

## GOVERNMENT SPENDING

**Mr. Mathieu Ravignat (Pontiac, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, taxpayers deserve better than an out of touch government that believes it does not have to follow the rules.

Since 2006, the Conservatives have spent more than \$10 million on press conferences, not to mention the travel expenses of ministers who jet across the country to eat lobster. There are two press rooms on Parliament Hill, and ministers can make announcements at any time in the House of Commons.

Why is this government wasting so much taxpayers' money on self-promotion?

[English]

**Hon. Ted Menzies (Minister of State (Finance), CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the government is actually quite proud to share with Canadians all of the suggestions we have put out, all of the ideas and all of the programs we have brought forward in a number of budgets.

It is our role to make sure that Canadians are aware. Along with our partners we made sure Canadians were aware of, for example, the home renovation tax credit. We had to make sure Canadians knew about that so they could apply for it. We need to make sure that Canadians are aware of the children's arts tax credit that is coming forward now.

[Translation]

**Mr. Mathieu Ravignat (Pontiac, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I am not sure that the Conservatives know their real role.

The Minister of Justice can boast about having one of the most expensive websites in the world: \$73 million in just over 10 years. That is expensive, especially when compared to the Public Safety website, which has cost \$500,000 in seven years.

### Oral Questions

Clearly, the Conservatives like to blame the Liberals, who are also expert spendthrifts. But is the government's excuse for everything the fact that the Liberals did worse? When will this government understand that money does not grow on trees?

[English]

**Hon. Rob Nicholson (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, CPC):** First of all, Mr. Speaker, any blame that we put on the Liberals, the Liberal Party has good cause to accept, so I cannot accept any comparisons to that.

With respect to IT costs, it is a very sophisticated process that we have moved forward with at the Department of Justice over the last number of years. It is money well spent. We are informing Canadians of the important measures we are taking on their behalf.

\* \* \*

### GOVERNMENT APPOINTMENTS

**Ms. Chris Charlton (Hamilton Mountain, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, the Conservatives want us to believe that \$70 million for one website is a good use of taxpayers' money. They want us to believe that \$10 million for self-promoting photo ops is good value. They want us to believe that rewarding a failed Conservative candidate with a \$135,000 a year appointment is responsible. It is not.

When will the government stop using the public purse to reward its political friends?

**Mr. Dean Del Mastro (Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister and to the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the story to which the member refers is inaccurate. The Cape Breton County Economic Development Authority is independent from government and makes its own decisions. We understand there was, in fact, a competitive selection process in this case.

As for the others, we do not comment on the staffing of ministers' offices.

I would say to the member that perhaps she could speak to her colleague from Burnaby—New Westminster. I understand that he is currently employing a failed NDP candidate in his office.

• (1430)

**Ms. Chris Charlton (Hamilton Mountain, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, we sure did not hear Conservatives say that crown corporations were arm's length during the Canada Post lockout.

The government has done the impossible. It has done an even worse job on patronage than the Liberals did. Some defeated candidates were appointed to the Senate, others were rewarded with government jobs, and the failed Conservative candidate in Mount Royal was hired as a ministerial adviser. This is not just old-fashioned patronage. Conservatives are keeping former and future candidates on the payroll. Why do taxpayers have to pay for their failed candidates?

**Mr. Dean Del Mastro (Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister and to the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, CPC):** I understand, Mr. Speaker, that the member in fact once ran as a candidate and was picked up as a staff member by the leader of the Liberal Party when he was the leader of the NDP. This is

common. All political parties hire partisan staff to work on partisan measures.

I would suggest to my NDP colleague across the way that if she would like to hire some good Conservative staffers, I have a list she might want to consider. I have full faith in all of them.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

### CANADIAN NORTHERN ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AGENCY

**Mr. François Lapointe (Montmagny—L'Islet—Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, yesterday we learned from the Office of the Comptroller General that the Canadian Northern Economic Development Agency has violated almost every rule in only two years of existence: expenditure control, contract management, use of credit cards, travel and hospitality expenses for its guests and all the rest.

Instead of helping northerners, the government is breaking all the rules of financial management.

How can the Prime Minister, who was the one who announced the creation of the agency in 2009, justify such a fiasco?

[English]

**Hon. Leona Aglukkaq (Minister of Health and Minister of the Canadian Northern Economic Development Agency, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, this is a draft audit. We take all audits very seriously. I look forward to receiving the final audit. We will address all the issues raised in the audit.

[Translation]

**Mr. François Lapointe (Montmagny—L'Islet—Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, we cannot expect to get any detailed or reliable response today, but we will try again anyway.

Development of the major projects planned for the north will cost Canadian taxpayers hundreds of millions of dollars, but the government is not even capable of managing a budget of \$75 million for the Canadian Northern Economic Development Agency.

Has the government lost complete control of northern development management?

[English]

**Hon. Leona Aglukkaq (Minister of Health and Minister of the Canadian Northern Economic Development Agency, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I encourage the member to travel to Nunavut, the Northwest Territories and Yukon to see what is really happening on the ground with regard to development.

Again I say that this is an internal audit. It is a draft audit. I look forward to receiving the final audit. Once we have received it, we will address the issues to make improvements.



**Mr. Dennis Bevington (Western Arctic, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, since it was created two years ago, the Canadian Northern Economic Development Agency has broken almost every rule in the book: out of control costs, contract mismanagement, improper use of credit cards and travel expenses, and the list goes on and on. This appalling record should put the Conservatives to shame.

Since the Prime Minister refuses to take the advice of his minister and the department, especially on the location of the head office, will he now stand and take responsibility for the mismanagement of this agency?

**Hon. Leona Aglukkaq (Minister of Health and Minister of the Canadian Northern Economic Development Agency, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, as I stated earlier, this is a draft audit. It is an internal audit. We take all audits very seriously. Once I receive the final audit, I will review it and put action plans together to address the issues.

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### THE ENVIRONMENT

**Mr. Dennis Bevington (Western Arctic, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, two weeks ago the U.S. government issued permits for Shell oil to release 250 metric tonnes of pollution in the Beaufort Sea, along the disputed territorial waters between Canada and the U.S. The so-called environmental standards developed by the Americans were clearly intended to apply to these Canadian waters. If we do not act now, we will be shut out of our own waters.

Has the government been involved in setting these environmental standards, or has it given up our Arctic waters and our Arctic sovereignty to the United States?

**Hon. John Baird (Minister of Foreign Affairs, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, we have ongoing discussions with our neighbours to the south on this and other issues that are important to the Arctic.

Obviously, this government will always stand up for Canadian sovereignty and fight for what is right. We have an incredibly important responsibility to ensure that our environment is protected and nowhere is that responsibility more important than in the Arctic, which has a very fragile ecosystem.

\* \* \*

• (1435)

### PUBLIC SAFETY

**Mr. Jasbir Sandhu (Surrey North, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, Canadians in Prince Edward Island and Newfoundland and Labrador were surprised this morning to find out that they have something new in common with British Columbia. These provinces are now also being threatened by the Conservative government. If they do not accept the government's deal on the RCMP, the RCMP will be pulled off the streets.

When will the Conservatives get back to the negotiating table and stop ambushing provinces with take it or leave it offers?

**Hon. Vic Toews (Minister of Public Safety, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, all of the provinces that have contract policing know that the date for renewing the contract is March 2012. Everyone knows that. That is when the 20-year agreement comes to an end.

### Oral Questions

On September 9 the B.C. government, which is leading all of the other provinces that have not signed, said it would send us its proposals to consider. I am waiting. I have not heard from that government.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

### CHAMPLAIN BRIDGE

**Hon. Denis Coderre (Bourassa, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Transport's duty, his responsibility, is to ensure that the existing Champlain Bridge is safe. Experts have released damning and troubling reports. The government is hiding the truth about the real state of the Champlain Bridge.

What would the government prefer to do? Table all of the audit reports and the certificate of compliance to prove that the bridge is safe, or one day defend itself in court for criminal negligence? Even the engineers think that we should prepare for the worst.

**Hon. Christian Paradis (Minister of Industry and Minister of State (Agriculture), CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the member for Bourassa is not one to lecture us about safety. I would remind the House that we have invested \$359 million to make the Champlain Bridge safer, including \$159 million in budget 2011, which the member for Bourassa voted against. That is not an impressive safety record.

I would like to share what the president of la Fédération des chambres de commerce du Québec, Ms. Bertrand, had to say about our government. She said, "After announcing an agreement on the harmonization of the GST and the QST last week, now we have a commitment on the Champlain Bridge...This is excellent news for Quebec's economy and we are proud to see the demands of the business community being heard."

**Hon. Denis Coderre (Bourassa, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, for the member's information, in 1999, 2000 and 2001, we worked on repairing the Champlain Bridge and also invested money in it. There is a bit too much asbestos in his riding and he is insulating himself. There will be a new Champlain Bridge, but there is a problem with the existing one. We want to know whether it is safe. We are not looking for quotes about how happy people are. We are happy about the new Champlain Bridge, but it will take 10 years to build. If the existing bridge collapses in the meantime, it will be a case of criminal negligence. It is a matter of safety.

We want to know why the government refuses to table the inspection reports.

**Hon. Christian Paradis (Minister of Industry and Minister of State (Agriculture), CPC):** Mr. Speaker, this is complete nonsense. They may very well have made investments, as they said, which were too little, but we have made massive investments—\$359 million, including \$159 million in the 2011 budget—and the member voted against them. Frankly, that says it all. If they care about safety, that makes no sense.

*Oral Questions**[English]***FOREIGN AFFAIRS**

**Hon. Jim Karygiannis (Scarborough—Agincourt, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, Majeed Uddin Ahmed, a Canadian citizen, together with his wife and their two Canadian children, ages five and one and a half, have been arrested and incarcerated in Saudi Arabia's notorious Dhaban prison for two weeks. One of the children is sick and requires medical care.

From the beginning, the minister was made aware of this situation. The family in Canada has been advised that it will have to wait until next week for news as officials have told them, "It is not in our route of travel".

When will the minister order her officials to change their travel plans and bring these kids home?

**Hon. Diane Ablonczy (Minister of State of Foreign Affairs (Americas and Consular Affairs), CPC):** Mr. Speaker, we are in fact aware of reports of this family being detained in Saudi Arabia. Canadian officials have been working, and will continue to work, with local authorities to receive formal confirmation of the family's present situation.

In addition, consular officials are seeking, if there is confirmation of the family's detention, to have consular access with the family. We are in constant daily contact with the family here in Canada and we will continue to work for the well-being of this family.

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*[Translation]***CHAMPLAIN BRIDGE**

**Mr. Jamie Nicholls (Vaudreuil—Soulanges, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, this government is finally responding to NDP pressure to build a new Champlain Bridge. We barely had time to celebrate—

**Some hon. members:** Oh, oh!

● (1440)

**The Speaker:** Order. Is there a problem with the translation?

The hon. member for Vaudreuil—Soulanges.

**Mr. Jamie Nicholls:** Mr. Speaker, we hope the bridge will not be built in Muskoka.

We barely had time to celebrate before we learned that families will be the ones footing the bill. Why is the government taking money from families instead of making their lives more affordable? Can the government tell us how much each family must pay to cross the bridge?

**Hon. Christian Paradis (Minister of Industry and Minister of State (Agriculture), CPC):** Mr. Speaker, this is an odd question.

I have an article here written by Louis-Gilles Francoeur on December 23, 2005. This article says that in a hotel in Montreal North in December 2005, the member for Outremont, then the environment and sustainable development minister, openly said he was in favour of extending Highway 25 and the bridge, a project that included tolls. Some people began to call it the Mulcair Bridge.

**Mr. Jamie Nicholls (Vaudreuil—Soulanges, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Transport is saying that there will be a toll on the

Champlain Bridge but that the bridge will not cost taxpayers a penny. Let us be clear, it is families that will pay. The municipalities of Montreal's south shore are wondering why their residents will be the only ones footing the bill. Families are also wondering why they are being punished.

It is currently free to cross the bridge. Why should families have to pay?

**Hon. Christian Paradis (Minister of Industry and Minister of State (Agriculture), CPC):** Mr. Speaker, once again, this is an odd question because the member for Brossard—La Prairie has also publicly stated that he is open to a toll system. I do not understand this double standard.

Everyone is happy about the bridge. They should be looking at this in a positive light and stop casting a shadow on this wonderful news. There will finally be a new Champlain Bridge that will be sustainable for future generations and affordable for Canadian taxpayers. That is what is important.

*[English]*

**Ms. Olivia Chow (Trinity—Spadina, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, the government's vague announcement is going to hurt Montreal families right in their pocketbooks. First, it decided to ding commuters every time they go to work; then, it saddles taxpayers with a cost overrun we know will come from these risky private ventures.

Could the minister tell this House who will own the bridge? Does he even know how much these tolls will cost? Will the government have any say? Or will the new bridge become a cash cow for some private company?

**Hon. Christian Paradis (Minister of Industry and Minister of State (Agriculture), CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I just stated what the member for Brossard—La Prairie said and I will quote him. He said, "In terms of tolls, it's still to be seen. Like we've always said, we're open. With regard to the Champlain Bridge's replacement, we're not dismissing the idea of tolls".

What is the problem today?

*[Translation]*

**Mr. Thomas Mulcair (Outremont, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I will also try to build bridges.

The Champlain Bridge construction project contains no plans for public transit. The minister says that that is a provincial responsibility, but if this bridge is 100% federal, as he likes to remind everyone, why are there no plans for federal-provincial coordination of public transit? That is important. So, the federal government is going to spend \$5 billion on the bridge, while, at the same time, further down the same road, the provincial government is spending \$3 billion on the Turcot project.

Will the Conservatives work in partnership with Quebec for more public transit, or is \$8 billion going to be spent to wind up with the same congestion problems? Talk about short-sightedness.

**Hon. Christian Paradis (Minister of Industry and Minister of State (Agriculture), CPC):** Mr. Speaker, one thing is clear: everyone seems to agree that a toll system is a viable solution for Canadian taxpayers. Finally, a new bridge will be built.



The Minister of Transport, Infrastructure and Communities has been very clear. We have taken the first step. We know where we are headed. We know that this viable infrastructure will be there for future generations. Yes, consultations will be held with the mayors in question and with the province in order to maximize this investment. That is how we will move forward.

Let us be clear: this viable infrastructure will serve future generations and will be affordable for Canadian taxpayers.

\* \* \*

●(1445)

[English]

## TAXATION

**Mr. Brad Butt (Mississauga—Streetsville, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, while our Conservative government is focused on helping create jobs and growing the economy with lower taxes, the NDP is demanding higher taxes. The NDP has clearly stated in its platform it wants to slap a huge \$10 billion-a-year job killing tax hike on Canadian employers. Lower taxes, not higher taxes, create jobs. Even the NDP Manitoba government understands that.

Could the Minister of State for Finance inform the House why the government and the NDP are—

**The Speaker:** Order, please. I will have to stop the member there. He is out of time.

The hon. Minister of State for Finance.

**Hon. Ted Menzies (Minister of State (Finance), CPC):** Mr. Speaker, in fact, the federal NDP needs to listen to its Manitoba cousins who agree that lowering taxes for businesses and Canadians actually helps create jobs. The Manitoba NDP government actually cut business taxes seven times in the last seven years. The Manitoba NDP finance minister said that if the federal government reduces corporate taxes, it will make a difference for their businesses, and they would be very happy with that.

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## HEALTH

**Ms. Libby Davies (Vancouver East, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, last year Health Canada's expert panel on caffeinated drinks recommended the minister better regulate energy drinks. However, instead of adopting the panel's recommendation to curb caffeine levels, she announced the caffeine content could be over twice the acceptable level.

Why will the minister not respect these expert guidelines to protect our children's health? Why is the Minister of Health siding with the industry instead of telling it to stop marketing to children? Why is the minister doing this?

**Hon. Leona Aglukkaq (Minister of Health and Minister of the Canadian Northern Economic Development Agency, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, we decided to take a balanced approach regarding energy drinks. It would give the parents and individuals like her more information. They can use the information to make an informed decision.

We looked at all the recommendations carefully and I believe we have a plan that is balanced. It would put the health of Canadians

## Oral Questions

first by giving them the information they need to make informed choices for themselves.

[Translation]

**Ms. Anne Minh-Thu Quach (Beauharnois—Salaberry, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, not only did the government ignore the expert panel's recommendations on energy drinks, but on top of that, it is going to take years to implement the changes that it is proposing. In other words, companies will have two years before they have to adjust to the new labelling rules. I do not find these regulations particularly energetic or very beneficial for our adolescents.

Why did the government give in to the interests of the industry and bring forward such a weak plan?

[English]

**Hon. Leona Aglukkaq (Minister of Health and Minister of the Canadian Northern Economic Development Agency, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, as I stated earlier, we carefully looked at all the recommendations coming from the expert panel, as well as a number of other sources. I believe that we have put a plan forward that is balanced. It would put the health and safety of Canadians first and it allows Canadians to make an informed choice for themselves as well as for their families. This is a balanced approach.

As a mom, I know that it is important for me to have the information to make decisions for myself as well as my child. The proposed changes today allow me to do that.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

## THE ENVIRONMENT

**Ms. Megan Leslie (Halifax, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, government scientists are being muzzled. They have to ask the minister for permission to speak to the media. Media coverage of climate change has decreased by 80%. Is that the government's real target? There are not enough statistics on the impact of the oil sands on greenhouse gas emissions in Canada.

If the Canadian Association of Petroleum Producers can exchange emails with Environment Canada scientists, why can the scientists not talk to Canadians?

**Hon. Peter Kent (Minister of the Environment, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the assumptions being made in that question are pure nonsense.

[English]

We have Environment Canada scientists available to talk to the media regularly and we make no apologies for finding more cost-effective ways to protect the environment.

We do have a plan to address climate change and mitigation with regard to meeting our Cancun and Copenhagen obligations, as well as adaptation, particularly with regard to the Canadian north.

### Oral Questions

We have a plan, and I am delighted that the commissioner for the environment acknowledges it.

• (1450)

**Ms. Megan Leslie (Halifax, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, industry has a cozy relationship with government communications as well. Oil lobbyists got government help to explain why oil sands emissions data were left out. "I appreciate the help on this, an important issue for industry..." writes one lobbyist in a thank-you note to the Conservatives.

Mr. Speaker, this is important for all Canadians. When will the government stop muzzling its scientists so that all Canadians can hear from them, not just the Conservatives' oil lobbyist friends?

**Hon. Peter Kent (Minister of the Environment, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, our government is prepared, and certainly Environment Canada is prepared, to communicate with all levels of Canadian society, whether it be in industry, whether it be non-governmental organizations, or indeed members of the opposition.

If my hon. colleague has any questions that she would like clarified with the department, I invite her to make contact with my office and I will arrange such a briefing.

\* \* \*

### THE ENVIRONMENT

**Ms. Kirsty Duncan (Etobicoke North, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, on Tuesday the Minister of the Environment insisted that Dr. David Tarasick was free to talk to the media about the Arctic ozone hole article he co-authored. I have a copy of an article written by a journalist on the subject on October 3, 2011, that clearly states that Dr. Tarasick was not allowed to discuss the paper.

Can the minister explain why the government blocked this interview from taking place?

**Hon. Peter Kent (Minister of the Environment, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, as one of my colleagues just reminded me, one should not believe everything one reads or hears in the media.

**Some hon. members:** Oh, oh!

**Hon. Mauril Bélanger:** You should know.

**The Speaker:** Order, please.

The Minister of the Environment has the floor.

**Hon. Peter Kent:** As I said several times this week, Canadians do owe a debt of gratitude to scientists like Dr. Tarasick and the other scientists who participated in this international report, and who regularly contribute to the greater knowledge of not only ozone but of all of the sciences of the environment.

**Ms. Kirsty Duncan (Etobicoke North, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, on Tuesday the Minister of the Environment said to this House, "We do not muzzle our scientists". However, I have in my hands a copy of the email exchange between a reporter and the environment minister's spokesperson, which unequivocally states, "An interview cannot be granted".

Can the minister please explain how his statement is inconsistent with the actions taken by his office?

**Hon. Peter Kent (Minister of the Environment, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I also said on Tuesday that Environment Canada scientists are regularly available to speak with responsible journalists, depending on their availability.

**Some hon. members:** Oh, oh!

**Hon. Peter Kent:** I would suggest that Dr. Tarasick will be available, again depending on his availability, to speak to representatives of the media.

\* \* \*

### JUSTICE

**Mr. Randall Garrison (Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, in 2005 Canada made the historic decision to allow same-sex marriage. Unfortunately, the Conservatives are now trying to erode this right by intervening in an Ontario case to oppose recognition of a same-sex civil partnership from the U.K.

The Ontario government has agreed to recognize this partnership under Canadian law, but the Conservative government is opposing the guarantee of full protection of the law to this couple under the Divorce Act.

Why is the Minister of Justice intervening in this case to deny equal protection of the law for all same-sex couples?

**Hon. Rob Nicholson (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the hon. member has it wrong. We have been very clear that we are not reopening the issue, but it is a legal dispute over definitions.

As the matter is before the court, I look forward to the decision of the court.

**Mr. Randall Garrison (Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, the government knows full well it is intervening in the case, not standing back from the case. The government claims it does not want to reopen the same-sex marriage debate, but that is exactly what it is doing by disputing the definition of a civil partnership. Conservatives are saying straight couples who move to Canada have more rights than same-sex couples.

Will the minister agree to respect gay and lesbian rights and stop opposing full legal recognition of same-sex marriages and civil unions from other jurisdictions?

• (1455)

**Hon. Rob Nicholson (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, we respect the rights of all individuals and we have been very clear about that. We have done nothing to reopen that debate. We respect the decision by Parliament, but it is a question of definitions, and that is being argued before the courts. We are intervenors, as are a number of other individuals and organizations, and I look forward to the court's decision.



[Translation]

## FOREIGN AFFAIRS

**Mr. John Weston (West Vancouver—Sunshine Coast—Sea to Sky Country, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the Palestinian Authority is unilaterally seeking to become a full member of the United Nations General Assembly. Many people fear that this unilateral action will hinder the negotiations for peace in the region.

[English]

The application is for full membership at the UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization. It is only exacerbating the situation.

Would the Minister of Foreign Affairs please share with the House the government's view on this problematic move by the Palestinian Authority?

**Hon. John Baird (Minister of Foreign Affairs, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, we are disappointed with the decision of UNESCO's executive body and urge all members of UNESCO to reject this unilateral action. The long-standing position of the Government of Canada is that we support a two-state solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and that the solution must be negotiated at the negotiating table between both parties. That position has not changed.

\* \* \*

## FOREIGN AFFAIRS

**Hon. Geoff Regan (Halifax West, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, Digby, Nova Scotia resident Philip Halliday has been in a Spanish prison for almost two years awaiting a trial date so that he can clear his name. He needs treatment for liver disease and cysts on his kidneys, but is not getting it. Friends and family are worried about his deteriorating health and the fact that no trial date has been set. They wonder why the government is doing nothing to ensure Mr. Halliday receives a fair and speedy trial or proper health care.

Can the minister explain why the government continues to abandon Canadians in dire straits abroad?

**Hon. Diane Ablonczy (Minister of State of Foreign Affairs (Americas and Consular Affairs), CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the member is well aware that the American government has agreed that Omar Khadr will return to Canada. We will respect the agreement between Omar Khadr and the U.S. government.

**Some hon. members:** Oh, oh!

**The Speaker:** Order. The hon. member for Montcalm.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

## DISABILITY INSURANCE

**Ms. Manon Perreault (Montcalm, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, the disability insurance plan is not fulfilling its mandate. People with serious disabilities cannot access it. Over the past five years, more than half the disability insurance claims have been rejected, and half of these people still do not have a job three years later. The program evaluation report indicates that 48% of beneficiaries live below the poverty line.

## Oral Questions

Will the government undertake to improve support for the disabled and put an end to this injustice?

**Hon. Diane Finley (Minister of Human Resources and Skills Development, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, our government has done more than any other government to help the disabled. For example, we signed the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and we introduced the disability savings plan. We also introduced several other measures to help these people and their families.

\* \* \*

[English]

## TOURISM INDUSTRY

**Mr. Blake Richards (Wild Rose, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, today our government delivered on our commitment to launch the very first federal tourism strategy. Would the hon. member for Beauce and Minister of State for Small Business and Tourism please tell the House how our government is working with the tourism industry to help create jobs and growth for Canada?

**Hon. Maxime Bernier (Minister of State (Small Business and Tourism), CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to congratulate my colleague for his recent nomination as the chair of the Parliamentary tourism caucus.

[Translation]

I am very pleased today to have announced the federal tourism strategy, which will ensure that the Canadian government's efforts to support the tourism industry are coordinated. We know that the tourism industry in Canada creates jobs and wealth for Canadians. This is further proof that we are concentrating on what is important to Canadians: economic growth and jobs.

\* \* \*

## EMPLOYMENT INSURANCE

**Mr. Jonathan Tremblay (Montmorency—Charlevoix—Haute-Côte-Nord, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, the people of Charlevoix and Haute-Côte-Nord have been hard hit by the economic downturn and seriously penalized by the termination of the employment insurance transitional measures. The minister has to understand that these measures were brought in because the economic reality and the labour market in these regions were not the same as in the Lower St. Lawrence and the north shore. By terminating these measures, the Conservatives are ignoring the reality in the regions and showing that they do not have a plan to help workers.

When will the government extend the employment insurance transitional measures?

*Business of the House*

● (1500)

**Hon. Diane Finley (Minister of Human Resources and Skills Development, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, as the hon. member said, these measures were transitional. The purpose of these measures was to help people who were having a great deal of difficulty finding a job because the unemployment rate where they lived was much higher than in other areas. For some time now, the unemployment rate in the region has been identical or comparable to other areas. The transitional measures are therefore no longer necessary. These people have the same opportunities as others in the area.

\* \* \*

**BORDER CROSSINGS**

**Mr. André Bellavance (Richmond—Arthabaska, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, on one hand, the government is negotiating a secret security perimeter agreement worth \$1 billion to make the Americans happy. On the other, the government is reducing the hours of border crossings and customs offices or even closing them, which has negatively affected security, the economy and tourism in dozens of communities close to Jamieson's Line, Franklin Centre, Côte-de-Liesse, Morses Line, Drummondville, East Pinnacle, Granby, Glen Sutton and Port-Cartier.

How can the minister justify these cuts, which are hitting the people who use these services hard, when it can find \$1 billion for the Americans?

[English]

**Hon. Vic Toews (Minister of Public Safety, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, we are very proud of our ongoing initiatives with respect to our discussions on free trade and security with the Americans.

We are also looking at ports of entry across the country, those on the 49th parallel and elsewhere. We believe that Canadians expect us to handle their money appropriately.

We are looking at the situation, and in cases where it is no longer justified to have those border crossings open, they will not be open.

\* \* \*

**PRESENCE IN GALLERY**

**The Speaker:** I would like to draw to the attention of hon. members the presence in the gallery of His Excellency Advocate Abdul Mannan Khan, State Minister, Ministry of Housing and Public Works, Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

**BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE**

**Mr. Thomas Mulcair (Outremont, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, first of all, I would like to ask the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons what his plans are for the rest of the week, as well as for when Parliament resumes following next week's recess, during which we will all be working in our ridings. In particular, I would like to know when the next opposition day is scheduled, for we have not yet been told.

Furthermore, my hon. colleagues know as well as I do that, for the second time in two weeks, the government is using a guillotine to cut

off the normal debate process in our Parliament. We find this extremely worrisome, since it has become quite common with this government. Now that they have a majority, the Conservatives' contempt for Parliament is clear. I would also like the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons to tell us when, in his mind, there has been enough debate.

[English]

The government is using the term "enough debate". For the second time in two weeks, it is using a guillotine to cut off the normal work of parliament that we were elected by Canadians to do.

Bill C-13 was cut off after exactly three hours of debate. That is a budget bill. It is one of the primary reasons we get elected to the House and after only three hours of debate, it is cutting it off.

I would like, on behalf of all Canadians and the House, to understand when, in the opinion of the majority Conservatives, there has been enough debate.

**Hon. Peter Van Loan (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise in response to the question.

I want to start by extending my best wishes to the opposition House leader. I fear that this may be my last Thursday question from him, as I understand he might be embarking on new endeavours during the next week. We have worked together exceedingly well, to the surprise of many, I might say, and perhaps even to the disappointment of some. In any event, it is fair to say we have exceeded everyone's expectations in that regard.

Should it turn out that someone else asks next Thursday's question, allow me to offer him the best of luck. I know he is a determined competitor in every endeavour he undertakes and that he will still be around here, though perhaps in a somewhat different role.

As for the business of the House in the coming week, we will continue debating the keeping Canada's economy and jobs growing act this afternoon. That bill is designed to include many measures that were discussed in the last budget and the previous election, such as the small business hiring tax credit, extending the accelerated capital cost allowance for investments in manufacturing equipment, creating a new family caregiver tax credit, forgiving loans for new doctors and nurses in underserved areas and introducing a new children's arts tax credit for music, dance and art lessons.

Further to the motion adopted in the House this morning, the government will continue with the third and fourth days of debate on this bill on Friday. Then we will be in our constituencies for a week and we will return on the following Monday.

The House leader has asked me how much time is enough when we are doing the work we were elected by Canadians to do. The work we were elected by Canadians to do was to actually deliver on that budget and its terms that were discussed during the election campaign across the country earlier this year in the same fashion as our commitment to deliver on our tackling crime bill. The tackling crime bill was part of our commitment that we undertook to deliver to Canadians, and we intend to do that.



This bill will have been debated more than the average time at second reading than a typical average budget bill in the last 20 years, in fact more time than for any budget bill under a majority government during the past two decades, which I believe were Liberal majority governments.

On Tuesday, October 18, we will begin debate on the copyright modernization act.

In terms of the next allotted day, I will at some point allot that. We have not yet taken a decision on that.

In closing, let me wish all members a happy Thanksgiving. I know the opposition House leader in particular will put that week to great benefit.

\* \* \*

● (1505)

[Translation]

## POINTS OF ORDER

### ORAL QUESTIONS

**Mr. Thomas Mulcair (Outremont, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my friend and colleague across the way for his concern, but I would also like to point out something that may have already been brought to your attention.

Contrary to the Standing Orders, the Minister of State for Agriculture used the name of an hon. member, in this case, mine. I understand that you did not hear him because I know you well enough to know that, if you had, you would have instantly risen to remedy the situation. We are not permitted to rise on a point of order during question period and so we count on you. I understand what happened but I would still like you to remind us of the rule that applies to everyone, particularly to ministers, who must set an example.

**The Speaker:** The hon. member is right. I missed that during question period, but this is a good opportunity to remind the members of the House that it is not permitted to refer to members by their names. We must refer to them by the names of their ridings or their titles only. I am certain that the hon. minister will remember this in the future.

**Hon. Christian Paradis (Minister of Industry and Minister of State (Agriculture), CPC):** Absolutely, Mr. Speaker. I must have gotten carried away in a heated debate. I was clearly referring to the hon. member for Outremont. I take your point, Mr. Speaker.

[English]

**Hon. Geoff Regan (Halifax West, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. As you know, it can be at times noisy in the House and I think the Minister for Consular Affairs may have had difficulty hearing the question I asked, which was about Mr. Philip Halliday from Digby, Nova Scotia, who is in a Spanish prison.

I would like to give her the opportunity, if you would permit, Mr. Speaker, to answer the question.

**Hon. Diane Ablonczy (Minister of State of Foreign Affairs (Americas and Consular Affairs), CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague from Halifax West for his courtesy. I have been back and

## Points of Order

forth with the House technicians about the sound for the last two weeks, so this is a good demonstration of why we need it to be fixed.

I appreciate my colleague from Halifax West raising this matter. Our colleague from West Nova is also in regular contact with me about the situation with Mr. Halliday. We are extremely concerned about this. We continue to be very active on this file and are continually monitoring the situation with regular consular visits to Mr. Halliday.

I can assure my colleagues from Halifax West and West Nova that this is very much a top of mind issue for our office and we will continue to work vigorously on it.

● (1510)

## STATEMENT BY MEMBERS

**Mr. Russ Hiebert (South Surrey—White Rock—Cloverdale, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I appreciate this opportunity to respond to a point of order that was raised by the member for Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca on September 29.

I have reviewed the transcript of what I said during statements that day and the transcript of the point of order raised shortly afterward by my hon. colleague. Clearly, the comments that I made were in reference to the recent second reading vote on the safe streets and communities act, which the member himself opposed. I believe that after careful consideration, Mr. Speaker, you would find that the comments I made in no way accused the member of supporting criminals or criminality and did not impugn his character, as suggested in his point of order.

I am aware that this is a sensitive and sometimes personal topic for many Canadians. However, I do stand by my comment made on September 29, that by opposing the safe streets and communities act the member and all of those who joined him in voting against the act were in fact putting their constituents at risk by maintaining the status quo.

I would encourage the member and his party to reflect on the important measures contained in our bill and to change his vote in support of the safe streets and communities act at report stage and third reading in the coming weeks.

**The Speaker:** I appreciate the hon. member assuring the House that he was not impugning anybody's character. I would ask all members, especially during S. O. 31s, to err on the side of civility when they are making their statements, especially when they are singling out a particular member.

I thank the member for South Surrey—White Rock—Cloverdale for that clarification.

## TABLING OF DOCUMENT

**Hon. Lawrence MacAulay (Cardigan, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. Having been elected to this place for a number of years, I am aware of a lot of the traditions in the House. When an individual refers to a document, particularly an internal government document, it is only fair that the document be tabled in the House.

*Government Orders*

I am sure the minister meant well, but he indicated that all was well with cutting the search and rescue centres in Quebec City and St. John's. This document will explain to the minister, to members of the House and to the general public the danger to safety that is involved with these closures.

I would ask for the unanimous consent of the House to table this document so we will all be aware of the dangers of closing the search and rescue centres in Quebec City and St. John's.

**The Speaker:** Does the hon. member for Cardigan have the unanimous consent of the House to table the document?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**Some hon. members:** No.

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## GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[English]

### KEEPING CANADA'S ECONOMY AND JOBS GROWING ACT

The House resumed consideration of the motion that Bill C-13, An Act to implement certain provisions of the 2011 budget as updated on June 6, 2011 and other measures, be read the second time and referred to a committee.

**The Speaker:** The hon. member for Kildonan—St. Paul has six minutes left to conclude her remarks.

**Mrs. Joy Smith (Kildonan—St. Paul, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, as I said when I first spoke this morning to Bill C-13, it is so important to get this implementation bill passed. It is important because there has been a great deal of debate, starting as early as March when the first phase of this bill was tabled in the House.

We have not only gone through debate, but we have also gone through a full-fledged election. In that election, the members on all sides of the House ran on the budget and explained it very thoroughly to everyone. After that, Canadians were well aware of what we stood for on this budget and brought us back to Parliament with a majority government. That was a clear message from the rest of Canada that Canadians wanted to have this budget.

What things were they supporting? One of them was 600,000 jobs. Those 600,000 jobs have been created due to the fiscal management under the Prime Minister and under this government.

What are some of the other things that are so important? I would ask members opposite to think about some of these things because this would impact all communities across our nation, both on this side and on the opposite side of the House. I think Canadians are paying attention to this debate in the House today. I think that in the municipalities, for example, in my municipality of West and East St. Paul, Canadians are very supportive of a permanent annual investment of \$2 billion in the gas tax fund to provide predictable long-term infrastructure funding for municipalities. Too often, municipalities had to wait to see what the transfer payment would be, and they put that very money to good use. This is in this implementation bill.

Also, the volunteer firefighters are waiting for their tax credit, which is waiting in the bill.

As everyone knows in the House, we have an aging demographic. It looks as if within the next 10 years as much as 25% of our population will be in the older age sector. The government, in its implementation bill, has introduced a new family caregiver tax credit to assist caregivers of all types of infirm and dependent relatives. It is very important to have that tax credit available. When family members need specific help, there is an expense to that help. Having this caregiver tax credit would be very important for them. We also propose to remove the previous \$10,000 limit on the amount of eligible expenses caregivers can claim under the medical expenses tax credit in respect of financially dependent relatives.

The children's arts tax credit is waiting in the implementation bill. In prior budgets, we gave tax credits for sports. Members of my family and many of my constituents participate in soccer, basketball, hockey and other wonderful sports for which Canadians are so well known. However, there was a cry from the communities all across Canada asking, "What about the arts? What about the music?" In this implementation bill is this tax credit waiting to be launched and implemented. However, without the support of members opposite to get this through right away, that tax credit is held in abeyance.

Education and training are of paramount importance. I know many school children are considering what they are going to be doing when they grow up. Even my own daughter wants to go into medicine and there are many new doctors and nurses who want to go to underserved rural and remote areas.

• (1515)

In this very important implementation bill, Bill C-13, there is the opportunity to forgive loans for new doctors and nurses who make those choices. I just visited Churchill. I was up north and I looked at the wonderful medical facility and talked with the nurses up there. I was discussing this particular part of the budget bill and they said that this would attract people into remote northern areas. I think this is very important.

Also, for students going to university, it is very expensive. That is also in the implementation bill.

There are many good things in this implementation bill, such as phasing out the direct subsidy to political parties. Canadians are saying that they want their tax dollars used for roads, infrastructure, all the things that they need. They do not want to give their tax dollars to political parties so they can do their political things and run for office. Political parties need to take responsibility.

I hope to see this implementation bill pass very shortly.

**Ms. Rathika Sitsabaiesan (Scarborough—Rouge River, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, the member opposite spoke briefly about post-secondary education and that this budget and the implementation bill supports post-secondary education. However, in reading the implementation bill, the only investment that I see is in creating more loans for students. By creating more loans for students who are carrying \$40,000, \$50,000, \$80,000 of debt, how is the government helping students access post-secondary education?



• (1520)

**Mrs. Joy Smith:** Mr. Speaker, in this particular part of the implementation bill it is the forgiveness of those loans. In other words, if new doctors and new nurses choose to go to remote areas they have the opportunity to have their loans forgiven, and that is very important. My own daughter, who is going into medicine, is saying that this is something that is very attractive.

Post-secondary education is of paramount importance to all in this country and these opportunities will be opened up.

**Mr. David Sweet (Ancaster—Dundas—Flamborough—Westdale, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I commend my colleague on not only a great speech but on all of the good work that she does to fight human trafficking.

I mentioned earlier, with my colleague from Burlington, the issues that we have in the greater city of Hamilton regarding steel and the manufacturing of steel, and not only steel producers but also steel fabricators, and the many different aspects of the value chain. I just wanted to ask my colleague how important it is that this bill gets passed to ensure that the measures come into force for corporations so they can invest for the future and create jobs.

**Mrs. Joy Smith:** Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for that very important question because the promotion of job creation and economic growth is of paramount importance.

Included in Bill C-13 is the temporary hiring credit for small business to encourage additional hiring, which will help all businesses. Also included is expanding the tax support for clean energy generation to encourage green investments as well. Also included is the mineral exploration tax credit for flow-through share investors by one year to support Canada's mining sector. Earlier today, several members talked about the importance of the mines in their northern constituencies. The government is listening to that and needs that to happen.

There are other things too. We talked earlier about the accelerated capital cost allowance treatment for investments in manufacturing. I have manufacturing in my own riding and the business people are telling me that it is of paramount importance for this to get through so they can have it.

**Ms. Rathika Sitsabaiesan:** Mr. Speaker, maybe the member did not understand the question I asked previously. The loan forgiveness program would allow members of our community who have already become doctors and nurses to pay off some of their loans quicker, but the problem today is that members in our communities are not able to get into universities and colleges because they cannot afford to pay for them.

How would the bill actually support Canadians accessing education? She wants to talk about the doctors and nurses but the problem is that rural communities do not have the facilities. This does not actually go to the root problem, which is that we do not have enough doctors and nurses in our communities.

**Mrs. Joy Smith:** Mr. Speaker, the Canada grants loans program has been improved considerably, and that certainly does help the students.

**Mr. Dennis Bevington (Western Arctic, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to speak to the budget, which I have not had a chance to

### *Government Orders*

speak to before. I will be sharing my time with the member for Terrebonne—Blainville.

I will divide my speech into two sections. First, I will talk about why we do need, not only debate but much more information about the direction in which our economy is going in relation to what we are doing within the budget.

The budget was first put forward in March 2011 and then re-entered in virtually the same form in June 2011. Since then, we have seen many changes to the world situation, including Canada's situation.

The budget was based on projections of an increase to the GDP of about 3% a year. We hear that the IMF has said that it will be 2%. What does the budget say about that? The Conservatives talk about it here, and it is something we should address in the debate and in the information going forward. In their plan to return to balanced budgets, they talk very specifically on page 208 on the estimated impact of a one year, one percentage point decrease in real GDP growth on federal revenues, expenses and budgetary balance.

Within that, we see quite clearly that in year one we will be short, from what we had projected as a deficit, of another \$3.3 billion. Those are the figures of the Conservatives. That goes on to minus \$3.6 billion next year.

We have an economic turnaround. Things were not as rosy as the government was presenting in a budget delivered before an election.

Now we are in a situation where the increased deficit will likely match up to what government is proposing to cut out of expenditures, which is \$4 billion. Where will that leave Canadians in the future? What pressure will it put on the government to continue to cut services, to continue to knock back on Canadians and not address the real issues, which, quite clearly, are finding ways to increase the revenue of the government in a way that would assist Canadians in righting their fiscal imbalance. The NDP has proposed that we not cut the corporate tax rate to the extent that we are.

There has been debate about Manitoba cutting the corporate tax rate. Provinces are very poor examples of a corporate tax rate. Corporations move their head offices from province to province in order to attract the lowest corporate tax rate in a particular province. I saw that phenomenon in the Northwest Territories in the year 2002-03, which upset the balance of our territorial budget by about \$300 million. So I know what I am talking about.

When we talk about provinces, they are the worst collectors of corporate taxes in the country because they are under constant pressure to lower their rates in relation to other provinces. The responsibility should lie with the federal government to collect the corporate taxes uniformly across the country.

### *Government Orders*

Where is the debate about what is happening to our economy and to our budget in a real good fashion? We can approve these expenditures but do we understand where they are leading the country? Yes, we should debate the budget.

I will now turn to a more hopeful sign. There was an item in the budget in March and carried forward to June of \$150 million for a road between Tuktoyaktuk and Inuvik, an important part of the infrastructure of the north. It is a part of the infrastructure of the north that in 2007 I introduced the idea to the previous minister, Chuck Strahl, in a meeting that we required these roads and this particular road. I am glad to see that the government has taken this on. However, the \$150 million will not build that road. The \$150,000 will build part of the road. The rest of the cost of the road will be assigned to the Government of the Northwest Territories.

• (1525)

In March of this year, I had a private member's bill in front of the House. The government, a person, voted against raising the borrowing limit for my Government in the Northwest Territories to fund valued infrastructure projects in the Northwest Territories. Since then, the Minister of Finance has promised our finance minister over and over again that he would give us some answers on the borrowing limit so that we can invest in the north, make choices on infrastructure and support our economy at a time when the recession is hitting us.

The Mackenzie Valley Highway is a project that the whole north supports. Up and down the valley, aboriginal land claims organizations have taken a section of the highway, have done the preliminary estimates, have the material together and are ready to go, in the very near future, to environment assessment on the whole Mackenzie Valley Highway, a distance of some 1,200 kilometres from the southern part of the territory to Inuvik and then on to Tuktoyaktuk. It is a road that, over the next two decades, would open up, and I am not exaggerating, tens of billions of dollars of development that would impact all Canadians in a positive fashion.

We have a great made-in-Canada project where likely very little of what we spend on the project will escape Canada to other businesses in other countries. It will occur in Canada. It is a great project that will provide relief to many communities that do not now have roads up and down the Mackenzie Valley, that have incredibly high costs of living and have isolated conditions that are really not appropriate in this day and age.

We have a great opportunity but we need to improve the fiscal capacity of the Government of the Northwest Territories. The federal government would not support my private member's bill in that regard. It stood up to a person against it. We need it and we need to understand the direction we would take with it. The government needs to come up with a better plan for investing in that highway.

In the April election, I was proud to see that my party, the New Democratic Party, had identified in our platform \$400 million over five years to invest in northern infrastructure, which is quite a bit more than the \$150 million that was put forward for the Tuktoyaktuk-Inuvik road. That is the kind of investment that is needed from the federal government, as well as from the Government of the Northwest Territories.

We have a vision of what we want to accomplish in the Northwest Territories. Aboriginal treaty organizations up and down the valley are supporting this effort. It is time. This is a great opportunity for Canadians. It is a great opportunity to help our economy at time when we need stimulus in the economy.

We need to recognize what we can do in the next few years that will improve our economy, whether it is green jobs, which will return to us and make us a stronger and better society, or a project like the Mackenzie Valley Highway that is needed to serve the orderly development of very important resources. These are things that we should be investing in and talking about right now.

This is a time when we need plans and leadership. We need to understand how this country can avoid what is clearly a gathering storm of fiscal recession that will eventually fall onto the land of Canada. We need this kind of positive debate about the budget. It is a budget that, after four months, is not really accurate and does not provide all the answers, which is why we are standing here today.

• (1530)

**Ms. Kirsty Duncan (Etobicoke North, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, the government has repeatedly emerged as an obstacle to international climate negotiations, ignoring science and winning one fossil award after another. As a result, study after study ranks Canada last or almost last in terms of climate change.

The 2009 assessment of G8 countries by Allianz and WWF ranked Canada last. The 2010 Suzuki Foundation and Simon Fraser University study shows Canada with the second worst environmental record of OECD countries, ranking 24th out of 25 countries. Now we hear from the Commissioner of the Environment that the government reduced climate change reductions by 90% since 2007.

I wonder if the hon. could comment on what the economic impacts of climate change are for his region.

• (1535)

**Mr. Dennis Bevington:** Madam Speaker, when we talk about climate change, we can say that we want to stop climate change and to do what we can to mitigate the advancing climate warmth before it happens. We can argue about whether or not that can happen, but the region of the country where I live probably has the fastest changing climate in Canada right now according to most scientific observers.

We do have impacts. We have problems inherent within infrastructure that will cost us more and more money in the future. We have problems with an increasing number of forest fires. We have problems with declining caribou herds.

Our whole society is having to accept that there will be adaptation. We know that no matter what we do in the next number of years we will not be able to stop many of the impacts that one or two degrees' warming in the earth's core has on northern conditions.



In the absence of this action by the government and many in the rest of the world, we need to see that adaptation plans are very clearly outlined for what is going to happen.

[Translation]

**Mr. Raymond Côté (Beauport—Limoilou, NDP):** Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for telling us about the situation in his riding. He and his constituents have a front-row seat to the impact of climate change. I congratulate him for trying to help his constituents directly by proposing solutions instead of simply suffering through these changes. As he said, one way or another, these changes are happening.

Could my hon. colleague tell us how direct government support for strategic projects, which would directly help his constituents in their daily lives, could change things and solve these problems?

[English]

**Mr. Dennis Bevington:** Madam Speaker, what we want is for the federal government to recognize that northerners understand very well what we need to do.

The government should support our territorial government in its efforts to deal with these issues. The territorial government is moving very quickly on many climate change mitigation issues. It also has an aggressive green energy strategy that it is putting big dollars into, in the absence of any money from the federal government in that regard.

The other side of it is the federal government is being very paternalistic about the borrowing limit for the territorial government. The territorial government is saddled with a borrowing limit that is far less than what it should be. We are a burgeoning, developing territory. We need to invest, and yet we are hung up by the Northwest Territories Act which limits our fiscal ability to put money into things that will actually make our society work better.

[Translation]

**Ms. Charmaine Borg (Terrebonne—Blainville, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to start by saying that this bill seems to be inspired by the same cynicism that Canadians have seen many times with every bill introduced by the Conservative government. The title of this bill talks about “keeping Canada's economy and jobs growing”. But the Conservatives added a provision that would eliminate per-vote subsidies for political parties.

Canadians are wondering if this is a taste of the strategy the Conservatives will be using over the next four years. They call a bill one thing, but they include provisions that have nothing to do with the main objective of the bill. These measures affect the electoral system and do not have the support of Canadians or the opposition parties. This is a cynical approach to politics. So it is not surprising that 61% of Canadians and 84% of Quebecers did not put their faith in the Conservative government in the last election. Their worst fears are coming true.

Before I begin speaking about the economy, I would like to take advantage of this opportunity to speak about per-vote subsidies for political parties. The chorus of support our party received from young Canadians during the last election aside, the participation of voters from my generation has progressively decreased over the past

### *Government Orders*

several decades. Naturally, since it suits the Conservatives' strategy, the government is taking little interest in this issue.

Canadians often wonder whether the Conservatives have considered why voter turnout among young Canadians has dropped because, if they did, the Conservatives would quickly realize that Canadians are becoming increasingly dissatisfied with the electoral system and the cynicism surrounding political campaigns. Canadians know that better options for an electoral system exist. They also know that our electoral system systematically under-represents the political parties.

Canadians know that funding for political parties should be based on popular support, not on the number of rich friends they have. The per-vote subsidy was an important step in making our political system more fair and equitable. That is why many countries throughout the world use the per-vote subsidy—because they believe in equity. In fact, the Conference Board of Canada ranked Canada 16th out of 17 countries in terms of voter participation. That is because people are fed up with the cynicism. Why are the Conservatives taking us backward instead of forward?

Canadians are facing difficult economic times, but the government is not taking this seriously. We see the weakness in our markets, our stagnating growth, the massive household debt, the growing inequality, the lack of security in Canadians' pension plans and the lack of jobs. In a spirit of good faith, I would like to begin by saying that some measures in this bill are a step in the right direction. Rural communities need more family doctors, small businesses deserve a break, and it is important to promote home care for those who are ill. But, like most of the Conservatives' plans, the provisions of the bill are too weak. The Conservatives do not understand that seniors need help urgently, young people cannot find jobs, people cannot retire in dignity, and families are being crushed under the burden of household debt.

Just as we saw with the Champlain Bridge, the Conservatives are blind to the severity of the current problem. Instead of truly helping families, the government is making them pay for things that should be free. What we have here is a government that takes half measures. But these half measures are not enough for Canadian families, seniors and youth. This is not what they are asking for and this is not what they want either.

Is now the time for half measures, when there are approximately two million Canadians unemployed or underemployed? No. And while the Conservatives tell us day-in and day-out that they have created 600,000 net new jobs since the recession, they neglect to mention that the labour force has grown by 450,000. And it should be said that far too many of those jobs are not full-time or permanent and cannot support families.

● (1540)

Youth unemployment has reached 17.2% and has risen every year since 2008. Yet tuition fees across Canada are increasing faster than the rate of inflation. Is now the time for half measures? No.

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Eleven million Canadians do not have a workplace pension plan, 250,000 Canadian seniors live in poverty and private pension plans have lost 20% of their value since the recession. Is now the time for half measures? Again, no.

I want to tell my colleagues a story. On October 1, seniors day, I went to my riding to speak with seniors, and I heard a very sad story. An 89-year-old woman told me that she wanted to die because she did not have enough money to live another two years. She did not know what she would do because in a year she would not have enough money to pay her rent. I was deeply saddened by that. I am wondering what this plan does for seniors. An extra five dollars a month is not enough.

Some 5 million Canadians do not have a regular family doctor. In 2022, there will be a shortage of 60,000 registered nurses if nothing is done. Quebeckers in particular are affected by the lack of health professionals. Yet this bill will do nothing to increase the overall number of doctors and nurses at a time when Quebeckers and Canadians need them the most. Is now the time for half measures? No.

This is no time to give \$2 billion to corporations. What will that \$2 billion do for families who cannot make ends meet at the end of the month? What will that \$2 billion do for this older woman who wants to die because she does not have enough money to keep paying her rent? Nothing.

It is clear that this bill fails Canadians in two ways. Not only does it illustrate the cynicism of the Conservative strategists, who are using a budget bill to dismantle fairness in our electoral system, but it also illustrates the Conservatives' insensitivity toward the real daily struggles of far too many Canadians and Quebeckers.

The NDP has a solid job creation program that compensates small and medium-size businesses, which are the real job creators. It has real and lasting measures, not temporary ones like what the government is proposing. It has a plan to provide security for seniors and improve our health care system in a permanent way.

What is more, the NDP believes that a fair electoral system is the best way to engage young people and all Canadians so that they come back to the polls. Canadians have a clear choice between the opposition, which wants to make life more affordable for families and promote democracy, and a government that is proposing half measures and playing political games to destroy our democratic systems.

● (1545)

[English]

**Mr. Harold Albrecht (Kitchener—Conestoga, CPC):** Madam Speaker, I welcome my colleague to the House of Commons.

The member spent the first part of her speech talking about the political party subsidies. By far, a large majority of the people I talk to believe that political parties should raise their funds from those who believe in that political party by doing some fundraising of their own, not by having funds given to them by the taxpayers.

The member went on to imply that this party somehow does not care about youth. I would like to remind her of some of the initiatives for youth that are in the budget.

We are helping apprentices in the skilled trades. I cannot think of anything more important in this day and age than to help our young people who are leaving secondary school to get involved in some type of post-secondary education. The reality is that for a lot of them, university is not a channel they can follow. We are facing skilled trades shortages already.

We are improving federal financial assistance for students. We are making it easier to allocate registered education savings plans. We are forgiving loans for new doctors and nurses in underserved rural and remote areas.

All these initiatives are really important as we move forward not just for youth but especially for youth.

How can my colleague and her party possibly vote against all of the amazing measures, of which I only listed four or five, that will help our youth and help Canada?

[Translation]

**Ms. Charmaine Borg:** Madam Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague for his question. He asked how I could vote against these measures. I am voting against them because they are half measures, and that is not enough. They may have programs to help students get into debt. Great, I congratulate them, but that is not right. Students should be able to attend school without the heavy burden of high debt. There have to be jobs for university graduates. This government does not have a plan to help young people get good, full-time jobs that pay more than minimum wage once they graduate. There is nothing for them.

● (1550)

[English]

**Ms. Kirsty Duncan (Etobicoke North, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, my beloved Canada once had an international reputation as a green country, with progressive environmental policies. However, Canada walked away from its Kyoto protocol targets. Our per capita emissions are double that of the citizens of Norway and the United Kingdom, six times higher than that of China, and 14 times higher than the citizens of India.

Tim Flannery, author of *The Weather Makers*, confirms the data. Canada is by far the biggest defaulter on its Kyoto obligations on a tonnage basis.

We know we have a 2020 target. The government can get us 25% of the way there by reducing greenhouse gases. I wonder what the hon. member would suggest to get us the other 75% of the way there.

[Translation]

**Ms. Charmaine Borg:** Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for her excellent question. We need to take concrete action and invest in the green economy. We must invest in reliable and renewable energy. We must have a plan. Honestly, I have not seen this government's plan.



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**Mr. Raymond Côté (Beauport—Limoilou, NDP):** Madam Speaker, I cannot congratulate my colleague opposite on his shareholder approach to political funding. Could my colleague elaborate on her concerns about political funding?

**Ms. Charmaine Borg:** Madam Speaker, I will repeat what I have already said. We need an electoral system that is based on popular support for a party rather than having a party win because it has 10 friends who are millionaires. We cannot have this ideology. We cannot have an electoral system based on having rich friends. That does not work in a country like Canada.

[English]

**Mr. James Bezan (Selkirk—Interlake, CPC):** Madam Speaker, I am going to be splitting my time today with the great member for Brampton—Springdale.

It is a pleasure to stand and speak about the budget implementation act and all the great things that our government is doing for Canadians. I want to talk about some of the areas that are going to be improving the conditions in my riding of Selkirk—Interlake.

Rural Canada, especially my riding, is made up of small business. Up and down the main street are family businesses. Manufacturing facilities often started off with somebody working out of a machine shed, developing some new products and getting into the manufacturing business quite by accident, like working off the farm and developing a manufacturing company. For us to support manufacturers, like ensuring we extend the accelerated capital cost allowance, would allow them to reinvest in their facilities.

When I talk to business owners in the community and representatives of the chamber of commerce, they say they know that when we bring forward the \$1,000 benefit in EI for new hires, all small businesses in Selkirk—Interlake are going to benefit. They know it is going to be well used, help them grow their businesses, and put more people back to work.

Rural areas require those opportunities and I am quite excited about this. Two-thirds of Canadians work for small businesses. The Canadian Federation of Independent Business said that this has been a high priority and it sees this as something that is going to support small businesses right across the country.

On a frequent basis I spend time in municipalities and over the last month I met with a number of councils. They always thank our government for putting in place the gas tax fund. They are now ecstatic that this fund is going to be put in legislation on a permanent basis, that they will no longer have to ask when it is going to come to an end or what is going to come after that.

Gas tax fund dollars really help them support their infrastructure and green projects. It is going to enable them to provide long-term planning and invest in projects they know are going to be of benefit to ratepayers and communities. This is a major investment and one that is well supported by municipalities right across the country.

Throughout the election campaign and when we brought in the budget last spring, one thing everybody got very excited about was the whole area of helping rural areas find doctors and nurses. There has been a huge shortage of doctors and nurses, especially in rural Canada. In my riding, the regional health authority is trying to recruit

doctors and nurses from other countries. That is not a sustainable practice. We have to start producing our own doctors and nurses, train them in Canada, and allow them the opportunity to move to rural areas and have their student loans forgiven through the budget implementation act. Doctors can have \$8,000 per year of their student loans forgiven if they practise in rural and remote communities. Nurses can have \$4,000 forgiven per year, up to a maximum of \$20,000. Those types of investments are going to be highly successful.

A little while ago I heard the member for Scarborough—Rouge River say that this would not provide any benefit whatsoever since rural areas do not have any facilities. That is an insult. I cannot believe she would criticize a program that is going to help rural Canada. There is a real disconnect with that NDP member. She should stand and apologize for insulting rural Canadians. We have our own doctors and medical facilities, and we need to ensure they are well staffed.

Some people would say we have a disadvantage because rural and remote areas do not have all the pleasures enjoyed in urban centres. I think that is a positive thing. I love what rural life provides, but let us make that investment happen, let us appreciate what rural communities bring, and let us allow doctors and nurses to move into rural areas with the benefit of having their student loans forgiven at a nice level. There would be young people moving into rural communities who will have a chance to maybe meet a significant other, start a family and call those areas home. I think that would be highly beneficial to all of us who need good medical care facilities, not just those of us in major urban centres.

● (1555)

The other thing that I heard throughout the election campaign that people are really concerned about has been the direct subsidies to political parties. Most people just cannot get over it that every party gets \$2.04 per vote. Most of us go out there, work hard and raise money. We are going to phase this subsidy out over the next four years.

However, I just want to share with members a couple of numbers. Last year, 2010, the Conservatives went out and raised \$17.4 million. Canadian taxpayers subsidized us at \$10.4 million. So we have a lot at risk here. We have a lot of money on the line.

The Liberals, last year, raised \$6.4 million and were subsidized \$7.3 million. So they did not even raise 50% of the funds that they have. The NDP is about the same. Its members raised \$4.3 million and were subsidized at \$5 million.

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The one that really goes me and gets my constituents really upset is when they see the Bloc Québécois last year raise \$641,000 but was subsidized at \$2.8 million. We are providing money to a party that is dedicated to the breakup of this country with \$2.8 million of Canadian taxpayers' money. The Bloc funds its entire campaign based on that subsidy and its members do not even bother going out there, working hard, connecting with their voters and supporters, and raising money directly. That is shameful. That is one of the reasons why I applaud the government's efforts to reduce and finally eliminate the direct subsidies to political parties. The vote subsidies really have to go.

Seniors, of course, are important to each and every one of us. They are our parents. They live in our communities. My riding of Selkirk—Interlake is a beautiful riding. People are living up and down Lake Winnipeg and Lake Manitoba. They love coming out to cottage country and retiring there. I am hearing from a lot of them that having the extra supplement, through the GIS, of \$600 per individual, or \$840 per couple, would be highly beneficial.

In rural areas, where a lot of the people did not contribute a lot to CPP, farmers and small businesspeople, they are the ones who are going to benefit from this GIS supplement. Even though it works out to only about \$50-a-month per person, it is still something that they would make use of. I have heard them say that this is something that is desperately needed and they congratulate us on doing it.

I was actually just talking to a friend of mine, on the street, just about a month ago. Jim said, "When can we get this done? I could really make use of that extra supplement on the GIS". He is glad that we are moving forward on it. That is why it is important that we get this bill passed.

Finally, one thing that I also heard a lot in my riding throughout the election campaign, before the campaign and since then, when I have been going around and having my community consultations and round tables, is that people want to ensure that all kids have a chance, those playing sports, at the \$500 tax credit that we have been able to put into place for kids involved in hockey, football, basketball, soccer, and figure skating, like my daughter. Those types of investments are welcome, but what about the kids who are making those huge efforts in the arts, taking piano lessons and drama classes, and wanting to become musicians?

By extending this into a new arts tax credit, we have a great opportunity to actually open the door for, hopefully, more kids to actually get involved in the arts, something that I believe in. All my daughters took piano lessons. It would be something that families with small children, families with teenagers, kids who have aspirations to become painters and who want to get involved in drama and acting, would now have a chance to do and receive that tax credit. Those families would be recognized for their investment into the arts. I think that is something for which we should be applauding the government.

I will leave it at that. I am very excited about having the bill move quickly. I am looking forward to all members supporting the budget.

• (1600)

[Translation]

**Ms. Ève Péclet (La Pointe-de-l'Île, NDP):** Madam Speaker, this timing is perfect, since my colleague was just talking about the arts tax credits at the end of his speech, credits for children's artistic activities. First of all, most families in my riding cannot afford to enrol their children in these kinds of activities. The amount parents have to spend in order to benefit from these tax credits is much too high.

Perhaps the government lives in an imaginary world in which all families can afford to enrol their kids in these kinds of academic or artistic activities, but that is not the reality. If the Conservative government really wants to make artistic activities accessible to all children, it needs to either reduce the amount needed to have to access these tax credits or else subsidize these activities, because not all families can afford to enrol their children in such activities.

[English]

**Mr. James Bezan:** Madam Speaker, I cannot speak to the situation in the member's riding. In my riding it has been applauded. The families I have heard from are aware it is their responsibility to make those initial investments. We will recognize that through tax credits. It is a way to reward the families who get involved by putting their kids into arts schools and drama classes.

In my riding there does not appear to be a difference in the social class or economic standing of the parents who have their kids involved in the arts. In Manitoba, even parents who are living on social assistance will make a decision to involve their kids in music or piano or guitar classes to ensure they are in the band. They are helping their kids go down that path. I have not heard anything contrary to that.

• (1605)

**Mr. Marc Garneau (Westmount—Ville-Marie, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, I will follow up on what the hon. member just said. Even people on social assistance want their children to get some exposure to the arts and that is a great idea. However, it is a non-refundable tax credit.

I hope the member understands that if it is a non-refundable tax credit and parents do not have taxable income they would not get any benefit from it whatsoever. They need to have taxable income to actually write off against the tax credit. It would not work if they are below a certain income.

It is the same with the firefighter volunteers and the family caregiver tax credits. If they are non-refundable it discriminates against people with low incomes. What does the member have to say about that?

**Mr. James Bezan:** Madam Speaker, the member can stand and rant and rave. However, the reality is that the tax credit will cost the treasury a lot of money. We know that families will benefit from it. We know that kids will be involved in the arts. Kids are already involved in sports and we have not heard a lot of criticism regarding our sports tax credit.

Members can stand and make all sorts of accusations and claims, but the reality is that this will be highly beneficial to families right across the country.



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**Hon. Vic Toews (Minister of Public Safety, CPC):** Madam Speaker, I am very concerned about the comments made by the NDP member for Scarborough—Rouge River indicating that the benefit that doctors and nurses would get by moving to rural areas would not be worth it because rural areas do not have medical facilities. That is an insult to the hard-working people in my riding who have chosen to go there to work as doctors and nurses. We want to encourage more people from urban areas to do that.

Perhaps the member should get out of Toronto every once in a while and come to a rural area like my riding to see the hard work that people are doing in such places as St. Pierre and—

**The Deputy Speaker:** The hon. member for Selkirk—Interlake has 30 seconds to respond.

**Mr. James Bezan:** Madam Speaker, I want to thank the Minister of Public Safety for that observation. It is one that I made in my speech as well.

That comment from the member for Scarborough—Rouge River was an insult to all rural Canadians. As the minister said, she needs to get out of the GTA and come out to see that there are hospitals right across the country in small rural communities as well as in remote communities. Those people need options when trying to attract doctors and nurses who are often from urban centres and have to relocate. Initially, we have to provide an incentive for them to work in rural areas.

**Mr. Parm Gill (Brampton—Springdale, CPC):** Madam Speaker, as the member of Parliament for Brampton—Springdale, it is my honour to represent my constituents in the House. I am pleased to have the opportunity to participate in the debate on the budget 2011 implementation act entitled keeping Canada's economy and jobs growing act.

Our government continues to focus on the economic growth of our country. I am proud that Canada has the strongest job growth record in the G7 and that the International Monetary Fund regards our economic outlook for the next two years as promising despite the global economic turbulence.

Since July 2009, Canada has created nearly 600,000 net new jobs. We are the only G7 country that has regained more than all of the output and jobs lost during the downturn.

The current global economic difficulties are largely due to the lack of confidence in the efforts of other governments to reduce their deficits.

This is a great opportunity for Canada to demonstrate leadership by example. Many of the initiatives in this budget promote strong, sustainable and balanced growth for both the short term and the long term. By implementing them we can lead the way in promoting global recovery and strengthening market confidence.

As we are not immune to the effects of the difficulties facing the global economy, it is especially important to stay the course and implement the next phase of Canada's economic action plan.

The next phase of Canada's economic action plan will preserve our country's advantage in the global economy and benefit Canadians from coast to coast to coast including my own constituents in Brampton—Springdale.

The first phase of Canada's economic action plan had a significant positive impact in my riding. The partnership between our government and the city of Brampton resulted in the creation of thousands of jobs and the revitalization of important community spaces, such as Chinguacousy Park and nine recreation centres.

These projects demonstrate the remarkable success of the first phase of the economic action plan in my riding. I look forward to the achievements of the next phase and the positive results it will produce for businesses, communities, families, students and seniors.

In Brampton—Springdale, many small business owners will profit from the temporary hiring credit for small businesses which will allow them to hire additional employees, creating more jobs and improving the growth of our local economy. Many of them will also benefit from the simplification of customs tariffs which will make trade easier and lower the administrative burden on their businesses.

We also have a large manufacturing base in the city of Brampton which will profit from the accelerated capital cost allowance. This will allow manufacturers in my riding to continue to invest in necessary equipment and machinery that will promote industry growth and economic advancement.

Our government has named 2011 the year of the entrepreneur. Along with the other measures aimed to support small businesses and manufacturers, this budget encourages young people to pursue their dreams by allocating \$20 million to the Canadian Youth Business Foundation.

The Canadian Youth Business Foundation will use this money to provide start-up financing and mentorship possibilities that will enable young Canadians to start over 1,000 new businesses that could be expected to create over 6,700 new jobs.

I am proud that the government is investing in a better future for our youth by providing support to young entrepreneurs. I strongly encourage young Bramptonians to turn their bright ideas into successful businesses.

• (1610)

The keeping Canada's economy and jobs growing act works to provide additional support for communities across Canada. It legislates a permanent annual investment of \$2 billion in the gas tax fund which will provide dependable long-term funding for infrastructure in municipalities.

Bramptonians have already seen the great benefit of this funding in their transit system. The millions of dollars the City of Brampton has received have been allocated toward various transit initiatives that have worked and will continue to work toward improving the quality and efficiency of public transit in our community. These initiatives have also created numerous jobs in Brampton, which is an added benefit to our local economy.

I am pleased that the government is emphasizing the importance of family with the new family caregiver tax credit. This credit would ease the burden on families in my riding who are caring for infirm dependent relatives. Their selfless service and commitment to family members is praiseworthy and enhances the quality of life for everyone in our community. These families need to be supported.

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Families will also benefit from the removal of the \$10,000 limit on the amount of eligible expenses a caregiver can claim on behalf of a financially-dependent relative under the medical expense tax credit.

The new children's art tax credit will allow families in our riding to enrol their children in programs that are centred on artistic, cultural, recreational and developmental activities.

Families in Brampton—Springdale will also greatly appreciate the investments in education provided by the next phase of Canada's economic action plan. Occupational, trade and professional examination fees will now be eligible for the tuition tax credit which will help apprentices in skilled trades and workers in regulated professions receive the certification they need to get into their chosen profession.

Our riding has a growing student population and families will benefit from improved financial assistance for students as well as measures that make it easier to allocate registered education savings plan assets among siblings without incurring tax penalties or forfeiting Canada education savings grants. This will make it possible for more young people to attend and graduate from colleges and universities.

Education is extremely important for the long-term economic health of both our local communities and our country. Not only is our government supporting caregiving and education, the budget provides much needed support for Canadian seniors by enhancing the guaranteed income supplement, expanding the new horizons for seniors program and eliminating the mandatory retirement age for federally-regulated employees.

As the member of Parliament for Brampton—Springdale, it is my pleasure to support the next phase of Canada's economic action plan. It provides support to small businesses, families, students and seniors in my riding that will allow our community to continue to prosper, even in uncertain economic times.

The investments and tax credits in the budget will directly benefit our local economy, which will in turn contribute to the overall well-being of our great country.

I look forward to assisting my hard-working constituents access many of these new benefits in the years to come and a future wherein the job market and our economy continues to grow.

Canadians gave our government a strong mandate to stay focused on what matters: creating jobs and economic growth. This budget does just that.

• (1615)

**Mr. Paul Calandra (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Canadian Heritage, CPC):** Madam Speaker, I congratulate the member on an excellent speech. In the short time he has been here he has helped restore the riding of Brampton—Springdale to a place that has an MP it can really count on. He has also been a successful business person.

Would the member comment on the proposals we are hearing from both opposition parties with respect to: massively increasing taxes on businesses; running massive deficits; their confusion with respect to our economic agenda going forward and whether they like

tax cuts or actually want to put more money in the pockets of Canadians?

Previous Liberal governments always felt it was better for the government to spend money rather than for Canadians to spend money on their families and their businesses.

Would the member comment specifically on how the disastrous proposals of the opposition would affect small business people and job creation?

**Mr. Parm Gill:** Madam Speaker, as a member of a family who owns a number of family businesses, I can say first hand that raising the taxes on small businesses, which are ultimately the backbone of our economy and the engine that drives this country, would kill small businesses. It would kill jobs and it would be a disaster for our country.

I am very happy that the government is moving in the right direction by supporting small businesses, which are helping to create jobs and putting people back to work. It is not by mistake that we have created almost 600,000 net new jobs. This was due to the prudent policies that were put in place by the Conservative government, and I am proud of that record.

• (1620)

[Translation]

**Mr. Raymond Côté (Beauport—Limoilou, NDP):** Madam Speaker, I thank the hon. members across the floor for doing their smoke and mirrors tricks again regarding job creation and support for small businesses.

During the finance department presentation yesterday, we learned that after all is said and done, a business could qualify for the famous little tax credit, which might turn out to be very little, without creating a single job, through a simple shell game of increasing premiums from one year to the next, from 2010 to 2011. And that is to say nothing of the fact that a business going through a rough spell after having a certain level of employment in 2010 could very easily create jobs without being able to benefit from the tax credit.

How can my colleague continue to defend this measure, which is unlikely to create any jobs?

[English]

**Mr. Parm Gill:** Madam Speaker, our government is concerned for all Canadians who are out there looking for jobs. Our job will not be done until we are completely back on track and get to the lowest level of unemployment in the history of this country. We are moving in the right direction.

I would encourage all parties, mainly the NDP and the Liberals, to support our cause to help better our economy and move it along in the right direction.

**Mr. Marc Garneau (Westmount—Ville-Marie, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, I will ask the hon. member the same question that his colleague did not answer.

The member talked about the family caregiver tax credit. Does he realize that if one has a low income, one does not benefit from this tax credit? I cannot ask the question more simply.



*Government Orders*

**Mr. Parm Gill:** Madam Speaker, I would like to remind the member that people would only qualify for a tax credit if they had paid income taxes or other taxes that are required to be paid. They would obviously not qualify to receive a tax credit if they had not paid anything.

I would also like to remind the member that there are a number of other measures in the bill that would help support families, seniors, students and businesses. I would encourage him to read them all.

**The Deputy Speaker:** On a point of order, the hon. member for Scarborough—Rouge River.

**Ms. Rathika Sitsabaiesan:** Madam Speaker, I would actually like to provide a point of clarification. From my previous question, I had members opposite misquoting me, and I would like to clarify.

When I spoke about the question, it was that this bill does not facilitate the creation of more jobs, or of more doctors and nurses getting jobs in rural and urban communities. It does not facilitate more jobs being created for doctors and nurses.

**Mr. Robert Chisholm (Dartmouth—Cole Harbour, NDP):** Madam Speaker, it is my pleasure to rise and speak for too brief a time on Bill C-13. The bill has the august title of “keeping Canada’s economy and jobs growing act”. It is quite a bit of fluffery, frankly, but let me move on to it.

Part of the trouble that I have with this legislation and the claims that government members are making about what it would do is that the government is the same government, with the same Minister of Finance, that had to be dragged kicking and screaming into the realization that the economy was in trouble in 2008 and that the government needed to respond. Only when the Conservatives had a near-death experience did the Minister of Finance bring in a fairly significant stimulus plan that made investments in infrastructure. Opposition parties were involved in ensuring that took place.

Now we have this bill before us. It would implement the budget that was introduced back in the spring, when the economy was at a different point.

Increasingly over the past number of months, we have seen what has happened in the United States, where the economy continues to sputter along. It is not making the kind of growth and the kinds of improvements that we would like to see. We are seeing European countries having significant financial problems and threatening to default on the bailouts they received from the banks in the European community.

It causes us some concern to hear the Minister of Finance continually saying, “Steady as she goes” and that the budget introduced last spring in very different economic circumstances is still the bill that the government is going to move forward.

Bill C-13 is full of half measures. It is a budget full of half measures.

For example, some members opposite were talking about increases to the GIS. We talked about that in June. We talked about the government failing to make the kinds of investments that would lift all poor seniors out of poverty.

We were not talking about ensuring that all seniors would have a home and a two-car garage, for heaven's sake. We were talking about lifting all seniors out of poverty, but the government was not able to go that far. It went halfway. For those people who will receive the \$50 a month, it will undoubtedly make some difference, but a lot of seniors will continue to suffer in silence.

That is just an example of the kind of half measures I was referring to.

We have heard government members claim *ad infinitum* and *ad nauseam* that the government has created 600,000 net new jobs. My colleagues have put some of the facts on the record to show that this is absolutely not the case. We have seen the addition of barely 200,000 new jobs since the pre-recessionary employment high point in May 2008.

As well, the labour force has grown by 450,000 since then. Those new jobs fall 250,000 short of the number needed just to hold employment steady. The government's claim of creating 600,000 new jobs is just specious. It is wrong. It does not hold water. It is not true, and the facts make that clear.

However, the most troubling thing about it is what these figures say about unemployment in the 15- to 24-year-old age group.

● (1625)

At the high point in May 2008, before the recession, 2,600,000 Canadians between the ages of 15 and 24 had jobs. The participation rate at the time was 67.6%. The official unemployment rate was 11.9%.

In August 2011, there were only 2,400,000 people between the ages of 15 and 24 years of age employed. The participation rate had fallen three percentage points, to 64.7%. The unemployment rate was 14%.

That means that there are almost 127,000 fewer jobs for the 15- to 24-year-old group today than there were before the recession. If we take into account the lower participation rate, that is another 133,000 jobs.

What that points to is the problem faced by so many young people in this country. When I rose in the House the other day, I spoke about how young people in Dartmouth—Cole Harbour invest in their education. As a result of the lack of support from the federal government for post-secondary education, those who can afford to pull some resources together to acquire student loans go into very significant debt in order to try to increase their employability by improving their skills and qualifications. They come out and, as the statistics show, at a time like this the jobs are simply not there.

It is a remarkably discouraging situation faced by young people, who are the talent and the human resource needed to continue to build our country into the future. Unfortunately, they find themselves working at part-time jobs and trying to cobble things together. The problem is discouraging at best; it is creating desperation at worst.

There is a gaping hole in these employment numbers, and the numbers are particularly affecting young people.

*Government Orders*

As for manufacturing jobs and jobs at NewPage, the pulp mill in Port Hawkesbury, Nova Scotia, hundreds of middle-aged workers there, women and men, are laid off right now. The provincial government, with no help from the federal government, is trying to put together a transition plan so that company could perhaps be purchased and restarted in some form.

It would be nice if the federal government would recognize that there are Canadians living down in the eastern end of this country and that it should start giving support to those people and communities. However, another several hundred Nova Scotians are going to be either heading out west or staying in Port Hawkesbury and competing with one another for those significant jobs.

In conclusion, let me say that there is another area where there is a desperate need for the government to invest.

I am the international trade critic, as members know, and the government is bullish on all the trade agreements it is trying to negotiate around the world. The one thing that really concerns me, and has concerned a number of business leaders in this country, is that the government is doing this without having an industrial policy in the country, without having a policy that has identified those sectors where good jobs are going to be created. That is where it should be investing, in order to ensure that we do not lose the potential to continue to build our economy and that we do not keep going down the road that returns us to what we were in the 1960s, which was hewers of wood and drawers of water.

• (1630)

We need to have good manufacturing value-added jobs in order to provide the kind of economic activity in our communities, jobs for people in our families that will make our communities strong today and tomorrow.

I am thankful for the opportunity to speak to the bill and I would like to indicate that I will not support the government.

• (1635)

**Mr. Chris Alexander (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of National Defence, CPC):** Madam Speaker, as the member opposite well knows, there are sectors that we know have been and will continue to be key to growth in our country. One is the oil sands petroleum sector, which has brought benefits to the member's riding, as well as hundreds across the country and will continue to do so if it has the support of the House.

My question for the member is the following. Civility is based on the ability to speak the truth, to be honest with one another. Is the member for Dartmouth—Cole Harbour really prepared to stand in the House and say that the number of 600,000 new jobs created in the country since the end of the recession, not a number from the government side but from Statistics Canada, an organization respected and relied upon by all of us in the House, is untrue? Canadians and his constituents deserve to know.

**Mr. Robert Chisholm:** Madam Speaker, I do not know where the member gets the 600,000 number, but the examination that the NDP has done of the numbers on the dates that I have described paint a completely different picture than the one about which the member has talked.

In the opening of his question he mentioned something about the oil industry, refining, and that kind of thing. Let me respond to what I thought he was going to say. I thought he was going to talk about the Keystone pipeline and the fact that his government was planning to ship another raw resource to Texas. Why we cannot add value to our natural resources in our country and create hundreds and thousands of good-paying jobs for Canadians? Why can we not do that?

[Translation]

**Mr. Raymond Côté (Beauport—Limoilou, NDP):** Madam Speaker, I want to thank the hon. member for his speech and his very interesting answer.

I have already condemned in the House our growing dependence on natural resource development, which traps us by putting us at the mercy of the fluctuations in international trade, as my colleague knows full well. In the meantime, we are seeing an incredible number of jobs disappearing in the processing sector. This was clear during the recent election campaign in Ontario when Mr. Hudak criticized this state of affairs and the loss of 300,000 jobs in Ontario.

I would like to invite my colleague to elaborate on the solutions we are proposing to truly diversify our economy and protect ourselves from the adverse effects of a possible recession.

[English]

**Mr. Robert Chisholm:** Madam Speaker, my colleague is also a member of the international trade committee. Economists have acknowledged and supported us in our claim that now is the time for the public sector to be investing in very necessary infrastructure. Now is the time, I would suggest, for us to start focusing on our transportation links across the country. We should look at things like rail service. I have heard from the Port of Halifax about the kind of stranglehold CN has on many industries and employers that are trying to transport goods. It affects our ability to trade, either export or import. Why does the government not make the kinds of investments that are necessary so we can move goods, services and people safely and dependably from one end of the country to the other?

[Translation]

**The Deputy Speaker:** It is my duty, pursuant to Standing Order 38, to inform the House that the questions to be raised tonight at the time of adjournment are as follows: the hon. member for Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca, International Trade; the hon. member for Avalon, National Defence.

[English]

**Mr. Lee Richardson (Calgary Centre, CPC):** Madam Speaker, today I rise to address the keeping Canada's economy and jobs growing act introduced by the Minister of Finance on October 4. I will be sharing the allocated time with my colleague, the hon. member for Etobicoke Centre.

This legislation provides key elements and continues the progress of the next phase of Canada's economic action plan, a low tax plan for jobs and growth.



*Government Orders*

With \$60 billion in targeted stimulus, Canada's economic action plan has worked. It has protected Canada from the worst of the global recession and is a testament to our country's resilience in the face of the challenging economic times that have plagued countries around the world. Our progress has not gone unnoticed.

Last month the World Economic Forum released its annual global competitiveness report naming Canada the soundest financial system in the world for the fourth year in a row. It is a rank of which our government and Canadians alike can be proud.

The praise for Canada does not end there. Just this week the prestigious financial journal, *Forbes*, reported that Canada was the number one country in the world to do business.

The *Globe and Mail* noted:

Canada has earned the highest reputation ranking in Reputation Institute's 2011 Country RepTrak. The study measures the overall Trust, Esteem, Admiration and Good Feelings the public holds towards these countries, as well as their perceptions across 16 different attributes, including a good quality of life, a safe place to live and a strong attention to their environment. Results from over 42,000 respondents worldwide showed that Canada scored well in all of these elements...

This is good news in a fragile world economy, yet global troubles remain. There are serious threats to global financial markets, continuing uncertainty and challenges around U.S. growth and unemployment, Japan's economic struggles to rebound and Europe's debt problems pose a risk to all of the world's economies.

Canada is not immune. We share the challenge of avoiding the devastating consequences of returning to global recession.

That is why completing the next phase of our economic recovery is so important. Canadians agree. Our government was given a strong mandate to stay focused on what really matters, job creation and economic growth. We will continue to make the economic recovery our number one priority.

The keeping Canada's economy and jobs growing act strives to protect and support Canada's economic recovery through the following measures: first, promoting job creation and economic growth; measures include providing a temporary hiring credit for small business to encourage additional hiring; expanding tax support for clean energy to encourage viable green investments; extending the 15% mineral exploration credit for flow-through share investors by one year to support Canada's mining sector; simplifying customs tariffs in order to expedite border trade and lowering the administrative burden for businesses; extending the accelerated capital cost allowance treatment for investments in manufacturing and processing machinery and equipment for two years to support the manufacturing and processing sector; and eliminating the mandatory retirement age for federally regulated employees in order to give older workers wishing to work the option of remaining in the workforce.

The legislation will support communities by legislating a permanent annual investment of \$2 billion in the gas tax fund to provide predictable, long-term infrastructure funding for municipalities.

It introduces a volunteer firefighters tax credit for volunteer firefighters.

It increases the ability of Canadians to give more confidently to legitimate charities by introducing a package of integrity measures designed to help combat fraud and other forms of abuse.

The legislation will help families by introducing a 15% family caregiver tax credit to assist caregivers of infirm dependent relatives. It will also remove the limit on the amount of eligible expenses caregivers can claim under the medical expense tax credit in respect of financially dependent relatives.

The bill introduces a new children's arts tax credit for programs associated with children's artistic, cultural, recreational, and development activities.

We will invest in education and training by forgiving loans for new doctors and nurses in underserved rural and remote areas.

● (1640)

It also will help apprentices in the skilled trades and workers in regulated professions by making occupational, trade and professional examination fees eligible for tuition tax credits and improve financial assistance for students.

The legislation before us today responds to and respects taxpayers in that it phases out the direct subsidy to political parties. Our government has the duty to use Canadians' tax dollars with great care and only in the public interest, especially in a time of fiscal restraint when families are struggling to make ends meet. For these reasons we have introduced legislation to gradually reduce the \$2.04 per vote per year allowance starting April 1, 2012 until this taxpayer subsidy to political parties is completely eliminated. This will generate annual savings that will ramp up to \$30 million by 2015-16.

This legislation will also close numerous tax loopholes that allow a few businesses and individuals to avoid paying their fair share of tax.

These new measures will help complement what we have already done.

Our government removed over one million Canadians from the tax rolls and increased the amount Canadians can earn tax free. We reduced the GST from 7% to 5%, putting nearly \$1,000 back in the pocket of the average Canadian family.

We introduced the universal child care benefit, offering families more choice in child care by providing \$1,200 a year for every child under the age of six. We introduced the child tax credit, providing personal income tax relief of up to \$320 in 2011 for each child under the age of 18.

We introduced the children's fitness tax credit which promotes physical fitness among children through a tax credit of up to \$500 in eligible fees for programs associated with physical activity.

We brought in the landmark tax-free savings account, the most important personal savings vehicle since RRSPs.

### *Government Orders*

We introduced income splitting for couples, eliminating the marriage penalty for one-earner families by increasing the spousal amount to the same level as the basic personal amount.

We introduced the registered disability savings plan to help families of children with disabilities.

In addition, families are benefiting from other new targeted measures, such as the first-time homebuyers' tax credit, the expanded homebuyers' plan and the public transit tax credit.

Due to our strong record of tax relief, the total savings of a typical Canadian family is over \$3,000 annually.

Moving forward our government will stay the course remaining focused on completing our economic recovery. We are launching strategic and operating reviews to find ways to improve government operations and programs to ensure quality and value for Canadian taxpayer dollars. By doing so, we will support our goal of returning Canada to balanced budgets by 2014-15, a year ahead of our original schedule.

As always, we will do so without raising taxes or cutting transfers to the provinces. We are staying focused on Canada's economic recovery while being mindful that the choices made by other countries can and do have an impact on us here at home.

In the words of our Minister of Finance, while we should not underestimate the risks, Canadians can be confident that our country is well positioned to face the global economic challenges ahead.

• (1645)

**Ms. Kirsty Duncan (Etobicoke North, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, we must strive to ease the burden of every individual struggling to recall a spouse's name, every person unable to recognize a child's face, and every family member or friend who brings them comfort and care. We must seek hope for all families struggling with Alzheimer's disease. We must renew our commitment to research that is improving treatments for this illness and which one day may prevent it entirely. We must leave no avenue unexplored.

It is fundamentally important to make sound fiscal decisions. We absolutely have the opportunity to change the course of Alzheimer's disease now. I am wondering if the hon. member thinks we should increase investment for Alzheimer's disease and dementia because it would save lives and would save money.

**Mr. Lee Richardson:** Madam Speaker, I know how hard the hon. member has worked on this file in the promotion of research and development and funding for Alzheimer's in Canada. Personally, I agree that we should look at this more. I know we are currently reviewing Alzheimer's disease, largely because of the member's efforts. I appreciate her efforts.

• (1650)

**Mr. Jasbir Sandhu (Surrey North, NDP):** Madam Speaker, my constituency is made up of families and a lot of small businesses. When I look at the bill, there is not much there, especially for small businesses.

I know my friends across the aisle have given big tax breaks to the big corporations, their friends, but in my constituency we need help for small businesses. We have already been hurt by the introduction

of the HST, which has been repealed by the referendum in British Columbia.

What is in the bill to help small businesses? I know there is a lot for the friends of the Conservatives, such as the banks, the oil companies and corporations like that.

**Mr. Lee Richardson:** Madam Speaker, as I was sharing my time with another member, I did not have time to get all of these great points in, but small business is one that I really wanted to talk about and I am thankful for the question.

There are so many good things in the bill for small businesses that I do not know where to begin. I just cannot get it all in with the time allotted. We have the accelerated cost allowance, which would be continuing. We have the temporary hiring credit for new hires. This is made for small businesses to assist in new hires. In any event, the general increase in the economy and helping Canadians by reducing taxes would generally provide an economic climate for small businesses in Canada compared to other countries in the world. This is a great environment for Canadians to invest and businesses to grow.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Before resuming debate, I should advise the House that the member is not sharing his time and we have moved to speeches of 10 minutes.

Resuming debate. The hon. member for Edmonton—Strathcona.

**Ms. Linda Duncan (Edmonton—Strathcona, NDP):** Madam Speaker, I wish to reiterate the comments made by my colleague from Nova Scotia. It is with great regret that the time is now limited. The government is forcing us to make fewer comments on what we consider are great inadequacies in this budget. So, I will try, in 10 minutes, to share some of the concerns that have been raised with me about the budget document tabled here today, Bill C-13.

Canadians face an historic deficit, through no fault of those impacted by the recession, and yet those most reliant on federal programs will suffer the effects of cuts to those critical services and programs, as we have been hearing for the last couple of weeks: cuts to Service Canada, assistance, employment insurance, immigration, pension benefits. I can speak personally for my riding that people desperately need assistance. They do want a 1-800 number.

Shifts to computerize further centralized responses deeply hurts those who most need this assistance: immigrants, those who live in isolated communities, the people of the regions.

Many seniors and aboriginal peoples are challenged in gaining access to computers. Many have problems with basic literacy.



*Government Orders*

To their credit, some volunteer organizations have stepped up to the plate, including the South East Edmonton Seniors Association in my riding which, with some help from the government, is actually trying to train the seniors on how to access this kind of information on line. However, it is still very stressful for seniors.

Many immigrants are challenged by government systems and language skills, in particular, temporary foreign workers. The reference to “just go and look it up on a computer” is basically not helpful to these contributing members to our society.

The second aspect of concern to this budget, which some of my colleagues have spoken to, is innovation in the next generation economy. Most disturbing are the blinders on the government in recognizing the need to invest in the new, cleaner energy economy. Strong support has been expressed for enhanced investment in the clean energy economy from provinces, the fossil fuel sector, the energy efficiency sector and by a lot of think tanks, including the right-wing think tanks.

However, most surprising is the support for investment by the federal government in moving forward on a Canadian energy strategy so that Canadian businesses and, generally, Canadians, can benefit from the investments that have been made around the world. What is happening is that our clean energy sector, our energy efficiency sector, because of the renegeing of investments by the government, are moving to other nations. We are losing in investment in securing our economy of the future.

Instead, the government is gifting billions in public dollars to a handful of energy companies to simply test technologies to deal with carbon, with no obligation in law to reduce the carbon emissions and no obligation to invest in R and D. The fossil fuel sector is known to be one of the worst sectors in the Canadian economy in investing in R and D. This is short-sighted and would put Canada at risk as a player in the new economy.

The third segment of my comments are about aboriginal Canadians. No segment of our population has suffered more under the Conservative economic strategy than aboriginal Canadians. This was clearly delineated by our former auditor general, Sheila Fraser, in her final audit this year.

Among her key messages for the 2011 audit was the failure by the current government and previous Liberal governments to take action on her 31 audit reports on aboriginal issues; 16 reports in the last decade addressing first nation and Inuit issues and 15 additional chapters dealing with issues of importance to aboriginal peoples.

As noted by the former auditor general:

It's no secret that their living conditions are worse than elsewhere in Canada. Only 41 percent of students on reserves graduate [from high school], compared with 77 percent of students in the rest of the country. And more than half of the drinking water systems on reserves still pose a health threat.

She went on to say:

What's truly shocking, however, is the lack of improvement. Last year, Indian and Northern Affairs Canada reported that between 2001 and 2006 there was little or no progress in the well-being of First Nations communities. In a wealthy country like Canada, this gap is simply unacceptable.

Over the past two years, the former auditor general presented 31 reports. However, despite those 31 reports and despite some federal

action, some attempts by the bureaucracy, the first nations still lack, according to the auditor general, what most other Canadians take for granted. “On the surface”, she said, “it seems that the government simply needs to work harder”. She suggested that we needed to look much deeper, and that, after 10 years, she had come to believe that we needed fundamental changes and that we needed to see meaning progress in the well-being of our first nations.

● (1655)

The auditor general said that we could not simply turn to the same old ways of doing business, that we needed substantive changes. We need funding but we also need major legislative initiatives. We see none of that in the budget tabled.

More specifically, the auditor general pointed out that there was no action on education. First nation children still receive 2% less support than other children. As for access to quality water sources, far too many communities still do not have access to safe drinking water. As for housing shortage, there is disrepair and dangerous mould in houses. Child and family services are not being delivered. First nation children are eight times more likely to be removed from their homes. Still, there is no major commitment by the government. It wants to address crime but where is the investment in facilities to help youth come together with elders and actually avoid the gangs with which they are becoming entangled?

The government has failed to implement obligations under land claims agreement. I have heard delegation after delegation of first nations concerned both with the specific treaty process and with the overall comprehensive treaty. The government is simply not living up to the honour of the Crown.

The problems that the auditor general reported involved not just the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, but also Health Canada, CMHC and Treasury Board. The auditor general, parliamentary committees and expert panels appointed by the government have all recommended deeper reforms beyond budget allocations. These include legislative regimes to govern such things as education, child and family services, health services and drinking water. They are the kinds of regimes that other Canadians benefit from.

However, the key to developing these regimes, as the auditor general recommended, as the Assembly of First Nations recommended and as many individual first nations recommended, is that they need to be consulted and accommodated. They need to be directly engaged. What the first nations do not want is one size fits all. They want to have the support of the government to provide the framework so that they, too, can be engaged, as the provincial and territorial jurisdictions are, in the delivery of their own services to the people in their communities.

### *Government Orders*

The government fully endorsed the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People. By endorsing the UNDRIP, Canada has committed to ending discrimination against indigenous peoples in this country and yet we see nothing specific in this budget to address the long-standing discrimination, despite unilateral federal jurisdiction and the duty to uphold the honour of the Crown.

The government has criticized aboriginal leaders who, in frustration, are taking their concerns to the courts or to the media. Where else are our aboriginal leaders to turn? I call upon the government to reconsider its spending priorities, to provide hope to young aboriginals and to show that we value their potential to contribute to society and to contribute to the economy.

• (1700)

**Mr. Daryl Kramp (Prince Edward—Hastings, CPC):** Madam Speaker, I think we all recognize that Canada and Canadians generally tend to be a caring, sharing society, and that we can understand and that we can appreciate. However, we need to have the means by which to care. We need to generate the income. We need to generate the wealth. We need to create jobs. In order to create jobs, as anecdotally proven, in business practices proven and in the world proven, we need to have a low tax base to draw jobs.

I know my corporate haters across the aisle seem to think that corporations are these nasty big beasts. Well, they are mom and pop operations. They are small businesses and big businesses. A corporation consists of owners, managers and shareholders. Some of the greatest shareholders in corporations are the unions that invest and are highly supportive of the NDP. Why does she wish to continually bash the income creators in this country?

We are bringing in accelerated capital cost writeoffs. I have a company in my riding, Procter & Gamble, that is investing over \$100 million, a lot of it due to accelerated capital cost writeoffs. It is jobs for everyday people who are working hard and can contribute back to our economy. What does the member have against creating jobs like this?

**Ms. Linda Duncan:** Madam Speaker, I am imagining that the member opposite actually heard my speech where I actually called upon the government to step up to the plate and engage Canadians, engage the fossil fuel industry, engage the territorial, provincial and first nation governments, engage experts, engage the energy efficiency industry and engage the Canadians who would like to reduce their power bills. They have all called upon the government to step up to the plate and start the dialogue on a Canadian clean energy strategy.

The government committed at Cancun to deliver a low carbon energy strategy. Where is it? We are all waiting for the chance to be engaged and nobody is waiting more than our aboriginal communities. The people of the Northwest Territories are waiting for the opportunity to be engaged. They would like to look into alternative energy sources. They would like to stop burning diesel oil and turn to alternative fuel and develop technologies that they in turn could sell to others. So, yes, I and my party are fully engaged and supportive of some kind of new innovative strategy to move forward into the next century.

[Translation]

**Ms. Anne Minh-Thu Quach (Beauharnois—Salaberry, NDP):** Madam Speaker, I would like my colleague to explain to us how the government's budget is undermining the public health care system by doing nothing to prevent the private sector from moving in and weakening the public system. Instead of adding doctors and nurses, the government is moving doctors from the public system to the private system, which is further crowding emergency departments in the public system.

[English]

**Ms. Linda Duncan:** Madam Speaker, the member's question is obviously in regard to health care and fair access. Timely access is a concern of all Canadians, but very much held by the people of my riding and all of Alberta. It is the top issue. People are deeply concerned about the suggestions that the government may be moving toward supporting some shift toward greater private delivery of health care.

Nowhere is that more critical than for our aboriginal communities. In most cases, the people who live in isolated communities have no access to doctors and very little access to nursing care.

I actually attended, over the last couple of years, the sessions delivered by the medical faculties and by the Rural Doctors Association. They have told us that we need a lot more direct incentives.

We need to get the government to encourage medical faculties to be putting more money into training more doctors and encouraging students who live in rural areas, including first nations communities, and enable them to go to medical school because they are the ones who are most likely to return to those communities and provide the public health care they deserve.

• (1705)

**Mr. Ted Opitz (Etobicoke Centre, CPC):** Madam Speaker, this is my first speech in the House and I am proud to represent the great riding of Etobicoke Centre. I am grateful to the good people of Etobicoke Centre, my friends, family and supporters for electing me, and I commit to always serve to the best of my ability. I am also the first Conservative in Etobicoke Centre since the hon. Michael Wilson, a great finance minister in his day, and I am singularly honoured to speak today to the keeping Canada's economy and jobs growing act.

As I said, it is with pride that I rise in the chamber to discuss the next phase of Canada's economic action plan. With \$60 billion in targeted stimulus, Canada's economic action plan has worked in protecting Canada from the worst of the global recession. Under the leadership of our Conservative government, Canada is weathering the global recession better than nearly all other industrialized countries. As a result, Canada has emerged as one of the world's top performing advanced economies.



Here are the facts. First, Canada has had seven straight quarters of economic growth, with nearly 600,000 net new jobs created since July 2009. Second, Canada's unemployment rate is significantly lower than that of the United States, a phenomenon that has not been seen in nearly three decades. Unlike my colleagues across the aisle who continually criticize our government for sound economic policies, I would point out that both the independent International Monetary Fund and the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, the OECD, forecast that Canada will be at the head of the pack for economic growth in the G7 for the years ahead.

However, the global economic recovery remains fragile, as Prime Minister Cameron himself spoke about in the House not so long ago, and we must continually work to secure Canada's economic recovery. That is why the next phase of Canada's economic action plan will focus on jobs, economic growth, supporting Canadian families, and ensuring Canada's economic advantage remains strong.

Our Conservative government believes that Canada's economic success depends on a competitive tax regime working to keep taxes low for hard-working Canadians and the businesses that employ them, like many businesses in Etobicoke Centre. The opposition's high tax agenda would increase taxes on job creating businesses to pay for billions and billions in reckless spending on bloated government programs in Ottawa.

Our Conservative government believes in a different approach, an approach that recognizes that Canadian workers and businesses should have more freedom to be innovative and creative with their hard-earned dollars. This is the right approach for economic growth and job creation in Canada.

Small businesses are one of the reasons why our government declared 2011 the Year of the Entrepreneur and it is committed to helping them grow, succeed and create jobs. For example, there is a new hiring credit for small businesses, a temporary one-time credit of up to \$1,000 against a small firm's increase in its 2011 employment insurance premiums over those paid in 2010. This new credit would help up to 525,000 employers defray the costs of additional hiring.

With regard to reducing red tape, we are upgrading the BizPaL online service to make it easier for businesses to obtain the appropriate licences and permits they need to be successful and further consulting Canadians through the Red Tape Reduction Commission.

As for supporting youth entrepreneurs, there are \$20 million to support the Canadian Youth Business Foundation's activities. The foundation works with young entrepreneurs to help them become the business leaders of tomorrow through mentorship, learning resources and startup financing.

We are extending work-sharing arrangements to help businesses keep their workers. There will be \$10 million in additional support to assist those employers that continue to face challenges by making available an extension of up to 16 weeks for active or recently terminated work-sharing agreements. As was mentioned earlier, we are extending the accelerated capital cost allowance to help manufacturers and processors make new investments in manufacturing, and processing machinery and equipment.

### *Government Orders*

The foundation of our country is families and keeping taxes low for Canadian families. Our Conservative government has also recognized and responded to Canadians by providing specific measures in Canada's economic action plan to ease the cost of raising families, keeping children healthy and ensuring money remains in the pockets of the mothers and fathers who work every day to support their children and loved ones.

That is why the next phase of Canada's economic action plan has included the following key measures. There is a new children's arts tax credit, a 15% non-refundable tax credit, on up to \$500 in eligible fees for programs associated with children's artistic, cultural, recreational and developmental activities.

• (1710)

Canada's economic action plan also includes the new family caregiver tax credit, which is a 15% non-refundable tax credit on an amount of \$2,000 for caregivers of all types of infirm dependent relatives, including for the first time, spouses, common law partners and minor children.

It also includes the enhanced medical tax credit, which will remove the \$10,000 limit on the amount of eligible medical expenses that can be claimed on behalf of a financially dependent relative.

Of interest to many, the extension of the eco-energy retrofit program is included to help families lower their heating and electricity bills by making their house more energy efficient with grants of up to \$5,000.

Our action plan includes help to students, which will allow full-time students to earn more money without affecting their loans, doubling in-study exemption to \$100 per week, and giving them a tax break on certification fees.

The Conservative low tax plan has resulted in a total savings for a typical family of over \$3,000. This is because our government recognizes that keeping taxes low for Canadian families will allow them to save and reinvest their money. I firmly believe that this is best for Canadians and best for the Canadian economy. Investing in our families is the right thing to do.

*Government Orders*

Canada's economic action plan includes support for seniors. These are the people who laid the foundations that we all walk upon today. Our government recognizes the valuable contributions seniors have made to the health and well-being of Canada. This is evident in my own riding of Etobicoke Centre where seniors contribute so much through volunteering and community engagement. That is why Canada's economic action plan is taking measures to improve the quality of life and expand opportunities for these very people.

Our plan includes enhancing the guaranteed income supplement. Eligible low income seniors will receive additional annual benefits of up to \$600 for single seniors and \$840 for couples, helping more than 680,000 seniors across Canada.

With respect to seniors again, our plan will enhance the new horizons for seniors program with an additional \$10 million to promote volunteerism, mentorship and the social participation of seniors, which is so critical to their well-being. These funds will contribute to enhancing community life through active and social living. The program will also provide funds to target and reduce elder abuse as well.

Canada's action plan includes extending the targeted initiative for older workers with an additional \$50 million to extend the initiative, which provides a range of employment activities for unemployed older workers in vulnerable communities of a population of 250,000 or less to keep them employed and to support their reintegration into the workforce.

Our plan will eliminate the mandatory retirement age for federally regulated employees. We are giving seniors who want to remain active in the workforce the freedom to make that choice by eliminating the mandatory retirement age for federally regulated employees, unless there is an occupational requirement.

The budget is responsive to the needs of Canadians and takes the appropriate measures to ensure that our economy continues to grow while offering Canadian business an operating environment needed to be competitive and responsive to the demands of the global economy.

**Mr. Jasbir Sandhu (Surrey North, NDP):** Madam Speaker, small businesses drive the economy of this country. That statement comes from economists and the many experts who have talked about how small businesses are owned by families. Any money they make from their small business is reinvested into their communities and generates more jobs. Small businesses are a major part of our economy.

Yet, my friends across the aisle are giving billions of dollars to large corporations, big banks, oil companies and their buddies. We do not even know if these large corporations will actually create jobs here in Canada. They may be shipping jobs overseas. With the billions of dollars that my friends across the way have given to these large corporations, they are sitting with \$500 billion on their books. That money is not being invested to create jobs. They are sitting on that money which should be invested in our local economy, so we can generate more jobs so unemployed people can find jobs.

I would like to ask the member across the way, why are the Conservatives against small businesses?

●(1715)

**Mr. Ted Opitz:** Madam Speaker, for a moment I thought members opposite were actually seeing reason. That was at the beginning of my colleague's speech.

However, if the member had listened to my speech, he would have heard that we support small businesses in a myriad of ways. We talked about the credit for hiring. We talked earlier on about expanding tax support for clean energy to encourage green investments. We talked about the accelerated capital cost allowance treatment for investments and manufacturing processes and machinery.

This government knows all about small businesses. We acknowledge that small and medium-sized businesses are the engine of our economy. That is why small and medium-sized businesses have a champion in this government.

**Ms. Kirsty Duncan (Etobicoke North, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, I congratulate the hon. member and my friend and neighbour in Etobicoke on his first speech.

I would also like to speak about one of Canada's veterans who served on multiple tours and was later diagnosed with PTSD. He loved his career in the military and the loss of his job broke him. It made him lose his whole identity. Today, he is tired of begging and grovelling for help and of being belittled. He says that when he gets home he cannot take the stress. He walks a tightrope everyday between his wife and his children. He says that there is not a day that goes by that it would not be easier just to stop. What keeps him going is his strong family life.

I wonder what more the hon. member thinks we should do for our veterans who are suffering with PTSD.

**Mr. Ted Opitz:** Madam Speaker, my hon. colleague and my neighbour to the north work together and we are friends.

I have a total of 33 years of service in the military, both reserve part-time and full-time. I have been on deployment as have many of my friends. When my friends come back from deployment, I can see this very clearly and I am extremely sensitive to that issue. Therefore, I thank the hon. member for bringing it up.

We are working on it. The hon. Minister of Veterans Affairs released a lot of initiatives today in his statement to deal with PTSD. It is an issue that we will be studying closely in committee. This is an issue that has our highest attention because of the health effects to Canadian soldiers.

**Mr. David Sweet (Ancaster—Dundas—Flamborough—Westdale, CPC):** Madam Speaker, regarding the initiatives about which the hon. member just spoke, I would like him to expand upon the initiatives for job creation for corporations, how those tax incentives and how things like the EI initiatives for work share are going to create jobs in the future.

**Mr. Ted Opitz:** Madam Speaker, the work share arrangements for EI would allow other members to share in those work programs so wages and EI benefits would be distributed among a wider group of people.



*Government Orders*

**Hon. Wayne Easter (Malpeque, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, I am pleased to have the opportunity to speak to the budget implementation act. However, I am very concerned about the limited time allowed. This act is about three inches thick, 640 pages plus, and the government, after three hours, brings in closure.

We are seeing the same thing at committees. When opposition brings motions before committee, the government goes in camera and basically votes against opposition motions and keeps them out of the public arena. What are we living in, an executive dictatorship in our country? Is this what the country is coming to?

This is a large budget bill with serious issues for Canadians in it, but the government shuts down debate. That is not the kind of country we have always known. We have known Canada to be a country that allowed debate, transparency and talked about issues in a comprehensive way. What we see from the government is closure.

Those on the back bench, although they get up and talk about its government, they seem to sit in fear, afraid to speak out against what cabinet is doing. It is a reckless government with a reckless agenda. It is just as simple as that.

The member for Oak Ridges—Markham can heckle all he likes, but the facts are the facts. This is a reckless government with a reckless agenda. We now have a huge deficit. The government has taken the country that was in a surplus position and drove it into deficit.

The government, to look at its message in the names of its bills, attempts to leave an impression. However, when Canadians listen to the names of government bills, they should not believe the implication in the name of the bill or what it should do is within the pages of that bill. The government is absolutely great at messaging, but it is what it does not tell us that we ought to pay attention to.

In the bill, the Conservatives talk about bringing in a family caregiver tax credit, which is a very important part. Also in the bill are a volunteer firefighter tax credit and a children's arts tax credit. Yes, it sounds good on the surface, but let us really look at it.

I will turn to the budget bill where it explains the volunteer firefighter tax credit.

I had a private member's bill in the House for years that would have done something for all the firefighters. If one serves as a firefighter, one deserves a tax credit. However, the government is denying the low-income earners. For students who may serve as volunteer firefighters, because they do not have a high income, the government would deny them the right to the same kind of credit, recognition and money as those who earn high incomes. In the government's budget implementation bill, this is a non-refundable tax credit. That means the low-income earners would not get the tax credit.

During the election we proposed, and what I proposed in my previous bill, a refundable tax credit. If one served, one deserved to get the money. However, as is the government's way, it has left the low-income people out of the bill.

Canadians should understand that when the government talks about a volunteer firefighter tax credit in the amount of \$3,000, it is 15% of that and firefighters really end up with \$450. Volunteer firefighters who are low-income earners, who still have to put gas in their vehicles to do the job, to get to the training, get zero, absolutely nothing.

● (1720)

That is the way the government operates. It supports the big corporations with tax credits and really, to a great extent, it throws a little chaff toward the small business sector. The multinational sector, the big corporations get the tax breaks and they get the tax breaks at a time when the income gap between the rich and poor is growing wider and wider. The way the government is moving forward is unacceptable.

As a party, we have asked the Conservatives to remove the minimum income threshold so low-income Canadians can also qualify, but the Conservatives have refused. We think it is unconscionable for the Conservatives to deliberately exclude the very people who are most in need of help.

That is not the only area and it is not all in this budget. We can look at other areas where the Conservatives are involved. Let us look at the crime agenda. I was standing outside while the Minister of Public Safety was doing an interview. One of his responses was "A million here, a million there, we don't have the numbers".

The member for Calgary Centre said in his remarks that the Conservatives wanted to be responsible with the public purse. We have never seen a government, in introducing legislation, as irresponsible as that government. It is bringing in a crime agenda that the Parliamentary Budget Officer claims could cost in the range of \$9 billion.

The government does not have the figures. It will not produce the figures. We know what the crime agenda will do. At the end of the day, it will mean more jails, more costs and more than likely, if it goes the same way as the Americans have gone, more crime. What will happen is people will be imprisoned for longer periods of time. Where they go in for a soft crime, they will come out as hardened criminals.

The government will not even look at the facts and produce the figures to tell Canadians how much it will cost for that particular crime agenda. The costs are not just in the jails.

We fought an issue in the House during the last Parliament. It was over the prison farms. Anybody and everybody in the criminal justice system will say that prison farms were perhaps one of the best rehabilitative tools for prisoners in the system. The government did not look at the facts and closed them down. Some of those operations were in fact profitable, but the government did not want to hear it. It just put criminals in jail. That is what this crew does.

Again, it is a reckless expenditure of money that at the end of the day will produce poor results.

### *Government Orders*

Let me go to my area of responsibility, which is international trade critic. There is not a whole lot in the budget, other than the fact that it will increase trade. The Minister of International Trade is going to China next week. He was at the committee today, but the chair of the committee would not let us ask him any questions. He would not let committee members ask any questions on the problem in the United States, the buy America proposal. The minister was only there to talk about the Canada-European trade agreement.

The government has a whole range of ministers in the area of international trade. There is the Minister of Foreign Affairs, but we know that most of his time is not spent concentrating on the subject at hand. Most of his time is spent defending the ridiculous expenditures of the President of the Treasury Board in terms of patronizing in his own riding.

• (1725)

My point is this: although it is good to be looking at trade in other areas, while the minister was flitting around the world, the government was caught with its pants down in terms of buy America. President Obama telegraphed on June 28 what he was going to do. There have been five speeches since that time, and the government failed to realize it and to be proactive by talking to the administration to stop him from closing down Canadian jobs with the buy American policy.

• (1730)

**Mrs. Cheryl Gallant (Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, initially budget 2011 was introduced in March. Then it was interrupted by a costly and unnecessary election. The Conservatives' platform was the 2011 budget, and the majority of Canadians decided they wanted it to proceed. The member opposite wants to stall the will of the people.

To whom does the member opposite want to deny the benefits in this implementation bill? Is it those who have infirm, dependent relatives? Is it the people who will benefit from the medical expense tax credit, or students who need financial assistance? Who is it that he wants to deny? Is it the firefighters who have been asking for the tax credit?

**Hon. Wayne Easter:** Mr. Speaker, the Liberal Party does not want to deny anyone. That is the difference between the party over there, which forms the Government of Canada, and both opposition parties, for that matter. We want to ensure that low-income people, whether they are looking for the family caregiver tax credit or the volunteer firefighters' tax credit or any other, qualify for those tax credits and those moneys the same as rich people do. In the budget they do not qualify, because it is not a refundable tax credit. That is what we are saying: it should be.

Will the government come to its senses and assist the little people out there who do the same kind of service, but are going to be denied the moneys?

The bottom line, to respond to the first part of the member's question, is that we want to see a budget with this many pages and this much potential, both negative and positive, debated fully in the House, rather than rammed through as the government is doing.

**Mr. Jasbir Sandhu (Surrey North, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, in the last federal election the New Democrats proposed a 2% cut in the small business tax. Our party actively campaigned on that. The

results show that we gained a large number of members in this Parliament.

In this budget I do not see that 2% cut, yet Conservatives are giving away billions of dollars to the large corporations.

Why are the Conservatives against the small businesses?

**Hon. Wayne Easter:** Mr. Speaker, the bottom line in terms of the budget is that yes, it covers a lot of area, but it misses covering the needs of the people who need the money the most.

I have heard colleagues of the member who just raised the question speak to this very issue. One of the most fundamental purposes of government is to create fairness and equity. That has been the tradition in Canada throughout the decades. We are seeing the opposite of that tradition and that policy in this budget, because it denies the money to the people who need assistance the most.

It is a budget that is extremely unfair. It is reactionary in many ways, and debate is shut down as though we have an executive dictatorship. This is a reckless agenda by a reckless government.

**Mr. James Lunney (Nanaimo—Alberni, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to enter the debate on Bill C-13 this afternoon, a very lively debate, and I am glad to see interest from members on all sides of the House on this important bill.

Bill C-13, Keeping Canada's Economy and Jobs Growing Act, is a very important one that follows up on our economic action plan that helped steer Canada through one of the most difficult recessions since the 1930s and in the lifetimes of most of the people here.

This is now the second phase of our action plan. The budget implementation bill we are discussing today brings into reality many of the things that were in the budget that was introduced in the spring and debated all the way through the course of the election. We ran on the pledges that are in the budget, and now it is time to implement them.

I will review a few of the things contained in this very big bill. It is a heavy piece of work, some 600 pages, and it is very important because it covers measures that will help keep our economy going in the right direction.

Our focus remains the economy. Our focus is creating jobs and keeping Canadians employed and making sure of the economic advantages we have in Canada, making sure they help us provide the measures that people depend on from government in this country and that we have the resources to keep meeting the needs of Canadians.

Some of the measures in the act include a temporary hiring credit for small business to encourage additional hiring. Some 525,000 small businesses in Canada will have the opportunity to take advantage of this credit to hire employees in the next year.



*Government Orders*

We are also expanding the tax support for clean energy generation to encourage green investments. Even in a tough economy, this is an important measure to help our environment. We are working on that as well, and provisions are in the bill.

We are extending the mineral exploration tax credit for flow-through share investors by one year to support Canada's mining sector. I come from the province of British Columbia, where mining is an extremely important part of our economy. We are a resource-rich country, and our mining sector is an important contributor to our GDP.

We will be simplifying customs tariffs in order to facilitate trade and lower the administrative burden for businesses. We are extending the accelerated capital cost allowance for manufacturing and processing machinery. That is very important to help keep Canada competitive in a competitive world. Those measures have been well received by the manufacturing sector, which has helped us maintain an economic edge in difficult times. That measure is being extended to that important part of our economy.

We are eliminating the mandatory retirement age for federally regulated employees in order to give older workers who wish to work longer the option of remaining in the workforce.

It is true we have an aging workforce. We have a shortage of skilled workers. I have a very skilled retirement community on Vancouver Island, but many of these people are quite able and willing to continue to contribute to Canada's economic activity by working just a little bit longer for the benefit of their own retirement in the future and for the benefit of their families.

Those are just some of the measures.

We are doing something to help our communities. For example, there will be a permanent annual investment of \$2 billion in the gas tax fund to help our municipalities. This is something that the Federation of Canadian Municipalities has been asking for. Our B.C. municipalities have been asking for it. It is tremendously important to help catch up on the infrastructure deficit that many of our municipalities are facing.

Another very important measure is the volunteer firefighters tax credit. Since many of our rural communities cannot afford a full-time professional fire force, we depend on our volunteer firefighters, and they have been asking for this measure for some time. I am very proud we are able to deliver on that. It is a 15% non-refundable volunteer firefighters tax credit to the amount of \$3,000 for those firefighters who perform at least 200 hours of service. In my community, this measure is very much appreciated.

While I am talking about volunteer firefighters, I want to mention a citizen we lost last year. He was named the Citizen of the Year in Parksville. His name was Don Brittain, and Don was the chief of the Coombs-Hilliers Volunteer Fire Department. He was fire chief for nearly two decades. This man exemplified what it means to be a volunteer. He motivated many other people. He knew everything there was to know about fighting fires.

I was at his funeral, and the community came out in a remarkable way to honour the contribution by this man to our community. This tax credit will not benefit Don Brittain, but many of the people he

motivated will benefit from it in our rural communities, and I know it is very much appreciated.

• (1735)

We are helping families by introducing a new family caregiver tax credit to assist caregivers of all types of infirm dependent relatives. That is a welcome benefit in our communities.

We are removing the limit on the amount of eligible expenses that caregivers can claim under the medical expense tax credit in respect of financially dependent relatives.

These are all important measures to people in our economy.

Then there is the children's arts tax credit, which even in tough times will encourage young people and families not to miss the opportunity for young children to develop their artistic talents, and I know it is very much appreciated.

All of our efforts are geared toward respecting taxpayers, including phasing out the direct subsidy of political parties. I received an email from one of my constituents this morning stating how much he appreciates that measure, because he does not believe he should have to fund parties that he does not agree with or support.

Canada's economic performance has been noted around the world. Our debt to GDP ratio is one of the lowest in the G7 and in the G20, at about 34%.

I was recently at a Canada-EU forum at the EU Parliament in Strasbourg. The target for EU nations set by the Maastricht Treaty was 60%, just for comparison. We are way ahead of our competitors in our debt to GDP ratio. That is something we are proud of. Since 2006, this government paid down nearly \$40 billion on our debt before the recession, and that has contributed to our healthy situation going through these troubled times.

We had more encouraging news from the IMF and the OECD. Both these organizations recently forecast that Canada's economy will one of the strongest in the G7 this year and next. Similarly, Fitch Ratings and Moody's recently renewed Canada's AAA ratings. Moody's August statement credited Canada's strong rating to what it termed "economic resiliency, its high government financial strength, and its low susceptibility to event risk".

One of my favourites is a quote from a *Forbes* business magazine that just came out:

Canada ranks No. 1 one in our annual look at the Best Countries for Business. While the U.S. is paralyzed by fears of a double-dip recession and Europe struggles with sovereign debt issues, Canada's economy has held up better than most. The \$1.6 trillion economy is the ninth biggest in the world and grew 3.1% last year. It is expected to expand 2.4% in 2011, according to the Royal Bank of Canada.

### Government Orders

We have a lot to be thankful for. Managing an economy through difficult times is something that has to be done very carefully and delicately. That is why these measures in Bill C-13 are very carefully crafted.

I note that time is getting skinny for me, so I would just like to comment on some of the economic measures that were put in place to stimulate the economy on Vancouver Island, in my area.

The new cruise ship terminal cost some \$24 million. Approximately \$8 million of that was from the federal stimulus plan. There are cruise ships coming in to that facility right now.

The Nanaimo Museum just reported it is seeing three to four times more visitors on the days when a cruise ship is in port. That is an indicator of the restaurants and businesses in the downtown Nanaimo area that are benefiting. As word gets out and more ships take advantage of this, we will see more tourism. When people come back to the cruise ship, we are ranked about 90% in terms of the experience people have had, and as the word gets out, we are expecting to see that spread to the entire mid-island area.

The pulp mills in our area are receiving benefits through the green energy transformation fund.

There was funding for our Vancouver Island University for a deep bay shellfish research centre. We are pushing forward with science that helps the expansion of our aquaculture industry, which is a very responsible industry, and recently there was more funding for a brand new international centre for sturgeon research, the only one of its kind in North America. That is attracting an international forum to Nanaimo that will bring scientists from around the world, and that will also help stimulate our economy.

All of these measures that we have been taking, including measures helping to keep people employed and measures targeting older workers and keeping people engaged, contribute to helping us get through the economic challenges.

We want to stay the course, keep our taxes low, keep our spending low and make sure we help Canada cruise through to more stable times.

• (1740)

[Translation]

**Ms. Anne Minh-Thu Quach (Beauharnois—Salaberry, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his speech.

I would like to ask him a question about the budget and families. The Conservatives say that the budget will help families. However, we see that there will be little help for caregivers. There is a tax credit for caregivers, but they generally do not have enough income to take advantage of it.

Have the Conservatives considered the possibility of direct tax benefits for caregivers rather than tax credits? In this way, whether they are low or middle income earners, they could receive financial assistance to continue helping the people and seniors in their family who often are sick.

• (1745)

[English]

**Mr. James Lunney:** Mr. Speaker, some of the measures that have been referred to are small but incremental. On top of what we have already done, we have just added a family caregiver tax credit and a children's art tax credit. In addition to that, we have cut over 120 taxes since we formed government just a few years ago.

We cut the lowest personal income tax rate to 15%. We removed over a million Canadians from the tax roll entirely. We increased the amount that Canadians can earn tax free. We reduced the GST from 7% to 5%, putting nearly \$1,000 back in the pocket of the average family, a measure that the party of the member opposite would like to reverse. We also introduced the universal child care benefit.

Altogether, these measures save the average family of four \$3,000 a year. We think we are on track in helping families.

**Mr. Marc Garneau (Westmount—Ville-Marie, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I think tax credits can be a good thing. They are a good thing if everybody benefits from them. However, there is a difference between a non-refundable tax credit and a refundable tax credit. Unfortunately, when we are talking about non-refundable tax credits, as we are here, those who are in the lowest income bracket do not get the benefit. Yet the government is acting as though everybody is going to benefit from its tax credit.

Does the hon. member recognize that those with very low incomes are not going to get the benefit of these tax credits?

**Mr. James Lunney:** Mr. Speaker, I heard the member raise this point earlier in the debate. He does make a point about the lowest-income people, but if they are not paying taxes, of course they will not benefit directly from this program. However, they do benefit when we lower the GST, because even the lowest-income people pay lower GST. Why does this member's party want to raise the GST?

I remember that when the GST was introduced many years ago, it was this member's party that campaigned on getting rid of it—but they forgot to. We lowered it from 7% to 5%, which has helped all families in Canada.

**Mr. Jasbir Sandhu (Surrey North, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I heard the member mention the IMF a couple of times and *Forbes* magazine.

I have another statistic from the IMF. The IMF projects that Canada's balance of payments deficit as a percentage of GDP is on its way to becoming one of the worst among advanced economies, worse than that of the U.S., and soon to be worse than those of Italy and Spain. Yet the government is more interested in selling our raw materials, whether it is oil going to the United States or raw logs going overseas to other countries.

What in this budget is going to help develop value-added industry in this country?



*Government Orders*

**Mr. James Lunney:** Mr. Speaker, the member raises an interesting point. We are a resource-rich country. We are so fortunate in Canada to have the abundant resources that we do, that we are able to generate great income in our country to meet our domestic needs, and also have energy that is in demand all over the world. In fact, many people have described Canada as an energy superpower. It is the funds brought in from our energy sector that help to fund many of the programs that we have, including transfer payments to the provinces for health care and education.

That is why we are keen on ensuring that our green energy development goes ahead and that investments in our manufacturing sector go ahead, so that we can continue to meet the needs of all Canadians through the benefits that come in through our industry.

[Translation]

**Mr. Raymond Côté (Beauport—Limoilou, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, this is my third 10-minute speech during debates on bills in a week, and I truly feel honoured to express my vision of Canada in the House.

I have taken the time to study aspects of the bill on implementing certain provisions of budget 2011 and, although I am in favour of some of the measures, others are not very useful and are even harmful in my eyes. As I have already mentioned on other occasions, the government is a major, essential economic player, and anything we do or stop doing has significant consequences for taxpayers, businesses and public servants.

In other words, Bill C-13, dubbed the “Keeping Canada's Economy and Jobs Growing Act”, is not worthy of its name. While the government claims to be promoting economic growth and job growth, we quickly see that it is not taking into consideration the priorities of Canadian families and that small businesses are being overlooked.

I will start with a tax measure that is useless to most and irritating because it is a shameless vote-buying ploy. I am talking about the children's arts tax credit, which will cost the national budget \$110 million in lost taxes without clearly promoting participation in artistic activities or affecting the millions of families who do not pay taxes because of their specific situation.

Between 35% and 40% of Canadian taxpayers do not pay taxes for one reason or another. In the vast majority of cases, it is because of their low income. A significant portion of these low-income taxpayers are our seniors. We cannot blame them for not paying taxes, because they are living on less than \$20,000 a year.

Another portion of these taxpayers is made up of families with young children whose parents are either young workers who earn close to minimum wage or victims of occasional or long-term unemployment. Most of these Canadian families will not be able to benefit from this tax credit because they do not have a high enough income. This is an elitist measure that excludes a large number of Canadians, people who need to get involved in society and give their children an opportunity to have enriching experiences.

Why exclude these families? Did the government call it a day after creating those 600,000 jobs and give up on addressing the pressing needs of Canadian families?

We have known for a long time that the Conservatives have decided to favour major corporations at the expense of small businesses. This year alone, the government has given nearly \$2 billion in tax cuts to businesses that are not held accountable for this massive amount of money. Although our plan is clear on predictions for job creation, the Conservatives refuse to listen to us and implement support measures for Canadian small businesses. The NDP wants to help families directly by creating good-quality jobs. These jobs will enable Canadians to live a decent life in this fragile global economy.

This week, we received the Conservatives' support on a motion calling for immediate economic action. The motion received the unanimous support of the House. Since they recognize the need to act quickly, why do the Conservatives not use their strong mandate to take immediate action instead of giving us this bill with a misleading title? Yet they gave us a strong mandate by supporting that motion.

This bill includes very few measures to stimulate the Canadian economy. There is a temporary tax credit of up to \$1,000 on employment insurance premiums, for one year only. This measure announced by the Conservatives does not target new job creation since it applies only to existing jobs. A business can obtain this tax credit by simply increasing an employee's hours. So how will this measure create jobs? It is wishful thinking to expect that that this measure will create jobs. Furthermore, since this measure is temporary, what guarantees that the jobs created this year will be kept next year? If the incentives for businesses are no longer there, why would they create jobs? While we are proposing sensible and responsible solutions for job creation, the Conservatives are throwing money out the window. Instead of giving a tax credit to create jobs, the Conservatives are blindly handing out tax credits.

• (1750)

In addition, there is no information available about the estimated number of jobs that will be created by this bill. We have the impression that the bill was thrown together. Canadian taxpayers do not want this government to squander their taxes, and they want to know what results to expect. This government must be responsible and forecast the results of this fiscal policy before implementing it. How many jobs will be created by these half measures or by this almost total lack of measures?

Is the government searching for economic priorities? I would like to provide one that is important to me in this “year of the entrepreneur”. In Canada, the entrepreneurship rate is declining and, according to the report on entrepreneurship, could sink into the red by 2018. The situation is that serious. Briefly, the report explains that the number of new entrepreneurs is not even sufficient to replenish firms that are already on the market. Owners of profitable and productive businesses will be forced to shut their doors if we do not act quickly.

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Quebec has been hit harder than the other provinces by this problem. The government has a duty to take immediate action to deal with the problem of entrepreneurial renewal in Canada. It must get its priorities right and be proactive. Encouraging entrepreneurial renewal is the best way of ensuring that our economy will develop in a sustainable manner.

The NDP is proposing clear actions to support the Canadian economy: cut small business taxes from 11% to 9% and offer a tax credit of up to \$4,500 for each job created within the Canadian economy. We also proposed an employee retention incentive that would include offering employers a tax credit of up to \$1,000 if they commit to maintaining the jobs created.

Our employment plan aims to create 200,000 sustainable jobs each year, jobs that will support Canadian families. That is concrete action, touch wood. We will ensure Canada's economic prosperity by supporting small business. That is a plan that works and that will work if the government agrees to use it to create jobs. It is solid. It is a plan that responds to the needs of Canada's small businesses.

To conclude, I would like to say that one of my many weaknesses is the pride I inherited from my late father. I refuse to be treated like a monkey being tossed a handful of peanuts. These crumbs are an insult to the intelligence and dignity of this country's families—I am talking about the tax credit for families for art activities—and a large number of families are excluded, as I explained earlier. People need far more dignified and respectful measures.

Can I, as a member of Parliament, accept that a mostly ineffective, needlessly expensive measure—one that has no effect on the families that need it most—is being inserted into this bill?

• (1755)

[English]

**Mrs. Cheryl Gallant (Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, what does the member opposite have against employers who employ large numbers of people? We heard repeatedly that he was down on large corporations. However, as we tax large corporations at higher rates, that means they can provide fewer jobs. Not only that, he is also biting the hands that feed him. We have large employers, who are largely unionized and whose unions, after all, provided \$85,000 worth of sponsorships for his party's recent convention.

[Translation]

**Mr. Raymond Côté:** Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the hon. member for giving me the opportunity to speak about the issue of large corporations.

I have absolutely nothing against large corporations, but I do have something against the preferential treatment this government has been giving them in the form of approximately \$10 billion a year in tax breaks since it came into office. This money has been completely wasted and the Conservatives are depriving the public treasury unnecessarily. As I said, the state has financial resources, but this government is giving them away big time.

• (1800)

[English]

**Mr. Jasbir Sandhu (Surrey North, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, we know that large corporations are sitting on a \$500 billion tax

giveaway by the Conservative government. I am glad that my colleague has talked about small businesses. They do drive the economy of our country.

I want to ask my colleague, why are the Conservatives so against small business?

[Translation]

**Mr. Raymond Côté:** Mr. Speaker, I do not understand why the Conservatives are so against small businesses, as the hon. member pointed out.

The hon. member mentioned an extremely important factor, namely the accumulated funds or the \$500 billion in cash held by Canadian companies, particularly large corporations. To use some imagery, it is about the same as the captain of a ship putting the ballast at the top of the mast, which, with the speculation we have been through in the past, will make it pitch more and more sharply and will make everyone feel sick.

All this risk is expensive and makes life difficult for Canadian families and small businesses. I therefore call upon the government to put an end to it.

[English]

**Mr. Tyrone Benskin (Jeanne-Le Ber, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask my hon. colleague to change the subject from big business to the so-called arts tax credit. I have worked in the arts field, and I have used the arts to help young, at-risk youth to connect with themselves and to learn the tools to become better citizens.

This arts tax credit that the Conservatives are producing seems to me to be something that only works for those people who actually have an income and who can actually pay for arts classes. Can my hon. colleague comment on that?

[Translation]

**Mr. Raymond Côté:** Mr. Speaker, my hon. colleague from Jeanne-Le Ber raises a crucial point. He is in a unique position to understand the needs facing the most disadvantaged groups.

The Conservative measure excludes so many families that, in the end, we have to wonder why they bothered introducing it at all. What is truly unfortunate is that, at the same time, many organizations are seeing their budgets being cut, even where money was well invested and producing results. Meanwhile, unfortunately, even for the families that can benefit from it, this tax credit does not even amount to one cup of coffee a week. How does this benefit everyone? It is basically a waste of \$110 million.



[English]

**Mr. John Carmichael (Don Valley West, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, it is my privilege to add to the debate on behalf of the people of Don Valley West on Bill C-13, keeping Canada's economy and jobs growing act. It is the people of Don Valley West who placed their confidence in me to ensure that we continue to move the economy forward and work to create a better Canada for all Canadians.

In April during the election campaign, there were three main issues that were foundational to my campaign, three issues that were consistently discussed on the doorsteps of my constituents, and it is these three issues that I would like to address with regard to Bill C-13 this afternoon. These three issues are: families, job creation and the economy.

I would like to begin with the economy as resolution to all of these issues flow from a strong and strengthening economy. Our Canadian economy is being recognized as one of the strongest and most stable in the world today and this is clearly a result of strong leadership and vision. Our government has cut taxes over 120 times since 2006, helped remove over one million low income families, individuals and seniors from the tax rolls altogether, and helped an average family save over \$3,000 a year through our economic initiatives.

I note that both the IMF and the OECD have forecasted that Canada will be at the head of the pack for economic growth in the G7 for several years to come. Canada enjoys the lowest debt to GDP ratio among its G7 partners. With all of these positive initiatives, we cannot forget that the global recovery remains fragile, something we have spoken about over the past four months.

Our government campaigned and committed to balancing our books and eliminating the deficit. Before the global recession, our Conservative government paid down nearly \$40 billion in debt. Our plan to balance our budget over the next few years is the cornerstone of the next phase of Canada's economic action plan. The good news is that we will do all of this without raising taxes on Canadians, unlike the official opposition that would raise taxes immeasurably and kill jobs or something the previous Liberal government accomplished by slashing provincial transfers to health, education and seniors in order to effect their balanced budget.

We understand that when Canadians are balancing their budgets at home, sacrifices need to be made. That is why, as a government, we are going through an extensive review of government spending, including scrapping the per-vote subsidy that was given to all political parties. We believe in using taxpayers' money wisely and that includes no free handouts to political parties.

The Toronto Board of Trade recently stated:

The 2011 federal budget achieves a prudent balance of tax stability and deficit reduction measures while pointing to longer-term infrastructure investment opportunities.

Additionally, the Canadian Institute of Chartered Accountants stated:

[The budget] strikes the right balance by keeping Canada competitive and demonstrating prudent fiscal management. This budget charts a course that will help Canada be competitive in attracting investment while establishing a fiscal framework that sets the stage for sustainable recovery and economic growth.

### *Government Orders*

With regard to business and job creation, Canada has the lowest overall tax rate on new business investment in the G7, an open invitation to new investment in this great country. In the Year of the Entrepreneur, we introduced a new hiring credit for small business. I have heard from constituents in my riding of Don Valley West who own a small family manufacturing business that they are able to hire two more employees as a direct result of this specific initiative.

We are working to reduce red tape through the Red Tape Reduction Commission.

• (1805)

Since we formed government in 2006, over one million new jobs have been created. Since July 2009 over 600,000 net new jobs have been created, taking us to a higher level than the pre-recession level.

We are lowering taxes for businesses in order to help create an environment that encourages sustainable growth, so that they can continue to hire Canadians. Let us not forget that over 90% of businesses in Canada are small and medium-sized businesses.

Our economy has become so well regarded that even *Forbes* business magazine, the influential business magazine, has just this week ranked Canada the number one country in which to do business and create jobs.

To again quote the influential Toronto Board of Trade, it stated:

—welcomed new initiatives to spur small business productivity and hiring, such as the hiring credit for small business. SMEs are the engines of job growth. Spurring productivity and employment growth among SMEs, as this budget does, should help Canada's economic recovery.

And it is doing just that.

Within this sector, manufacturing continues to play an important role. Our government is working hard to create the right environment to stimulate manufacturing growth and job creation in Canada.

The Canadian Manufacturers and Exporters Association said:

The extension of the two year write-off for investments in manufacturing and processing technologies announced in [budget 2011] is critical to sustaining Canada's economic recovery...In an era of economic uncertainty, this tax measure gives manufacturers the confidence to invest in their future by boosting purchases of productivity-enhancing technologies.

Finally, I would like to address what our government is doing to assist families at this time.

We believe in families, and to prove that we have introduced a new children's arts tax credit of up to \$500 in eligible fees for programs associated with children's arts, cultural, recreational and developmental activities.

We introduced the children's fitness tax credit, promoting physical fitness among our youth through a credit of up to \$500 in eligible fees for programs associated with physical activity.

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We brought in the landmark tax free savings account, the most important personal savings vehicle since the RRSP was born.

We have introduced a new family caregiver tax credit, an amount of \$2,000 for caregivers of all types of infirm dependent relatives, including for the first time, spouses, common law partners and minor children.

Our government is extending the eco-energy retrofit program to help families lower their heating and electricity bills by making their house more energy efficient.

I have nine seniors homes in my riding and this past weekend on National Seniors Day, I had the pleasure of visiting hundreds of seniors in these homes and witnessing the impact the new horizons for seniors program has on the every day lives of seniors.

Our government has enhanced the guaranteed income supplement. Eligible seniors will receive additional annual benefits of up to \$600 a year.

The C.D. Howe Institute stated:

—the new Guaranteed Income Supplement (GIS) top-up benefit for low-income seniors, would bring a meaningful increase in benefits too low-income seniors.

We have eliminated the mandatory retirement age, allowing Canadians to work longer.

According to the Canadian Taxpayers Federation, “People have a right to determine how long they work, and this is a major step toward eliminating poverty for seniors”.

Our government is working for Canadians. I urge the opposition parties to abandon their high tax, job killing agenda, and support these initiatives which are working for Canadians and for all of Canada.

•(1810)

**Mr. Jasbir Sandhu (Surrey North, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, Conservative after Conservative has mentioned the IMF, *Forbes* business magazine, and other agencies around the world and how well our economy is doing.

Here is another fact. The IMF projects that Canada's balance of payments deficit as a percentage of GDP is on its way to becoming one of the worse among advanced economies, worse than the U.S., and we are slowly approaching Italy and Spain.

What does this mean? It means that the Conservatives plan to ship raw materials such as oil and logs from British Columbia and other parts of Canada to the states or other countries. This means that jobs are going to be shipped from Canada. That is the Conservatives plan.

I would like to know from the member what the Conservatives are going to do in the budget that will help our secondary industries have value-added industries as part of a plan that will bring jobs to Canada?

**Mr. John Carmichael:** Mr. Speaker, I have listened to the debate this afternoon and there are two very separate ideological differences between us and the opposition. I am here to celebrate our successes. I want to celebrate Canada and all the good things that we do in the country. As I listened to some of the questions and comments coming from the opposition, as I stand here proud of the country and all the good things we are doing, I do not understand how we can

take a negative approach from the other side and pummel this economy into the ground.

World expert after world expert talk to us about the great things we are doing in our country. I encourage the member to celebrate our successes, not knock them.

•(1815)

**Ms. Kirsty Duncan (Etobicoke North, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I know the member has an interest in health. One in three, or ten million Canadians, will be affected by a neurological or psychiatric disease, disorder or injury at some point in their lives. There are no cures for ALS, MS, Alzheimer's or Parkinson's disease and no effective treatments that consistently slow or stop the course of these devastating neurodegenerative diseases.

Statistics are neat and tidy. They do not show the reality of those living with the diseases. Nor do they truly reflect the significant burden on Canadian families. Does the hon. member think the government should commit to a national brain strategy for Canada?

**Mr. John Carmichael:** Mr. Speaker, I know the member has spent a tremendous amount of her career and efforts on addressing these issues. I clearly understand her empathy and understanding of these issues.

Our government is deeply concerned, as is every Canadian about these issues. We have created the new brain centre initiative to fund the new brain centre. We recently announced that we would be reviewing all initiatives and spending in this area to see what other initiatives we could become involved in that would help in finding solutions. We are probably not far apart in terms of understanding and addressing these issues. I look forward to greater dialogue in that area with the member.

**Mr. Robert Sopuck (Dauphin—Swan River—Marquette, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask my friend, the hon. member for Don Valley West, who was a very successful entrepreneur in his own right, a fairly simple question. What does it take to create jobs and wealth? Why does the NDP not understand the principles of wealth and job creation?

**Mr. John Carmichael:** Mr. Speaker, as an entrepreneur and a business person, Canadians work hard every day. There was a comment made earlier that we did not celebrate entrepreneurs. I entirely disagree with that. We celebrate the entrepreneurial spirit of Canadians. Business people need to work in a positive environment. They need to build success in order to meet obligations, to pay the bank, the payroll, all the things that businesses do every day in all shapes and sizes of small and medium enterprises.

I do not understand why the party opposite cannot get on board with these initiatives to help Canadians become more successful in their everyday lives.



[Translation]

**Mr. Jamie Nicholls (Vaudreuil—Soulanges, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, Bill C-13 contains a number of intolerable elements. For one, the Conservative government wishes to use this bill to end public funding for political parties. What a shameful proposal. Public funding for political parties is a key element to maintaining democracy in Canada.

The political party financing system offers equal access for all political parties and gives political parties that cannot afford it an opportunity to have their voices heard. Obviously, the Conservative Party would prefer to have a system that favours rich political parties to the detriment of smaller parties. No one is surprised by the fact that the Conservative government is proposing such a measure. It is yet another tactic to solidify their power and muzzle those who have a different vision for Canada.

Public funding for political parties was implemented to put an end to corruption in politics and meddling by rich entrepreneurs. If the state does not subsidize political parties, the funding must come exclusively from private sources. Without public funding, the government would not be much different from a business. Perhaps the government's next proposal will be that political parties be put on the stock market, I do not know.

● (1820)

[English]

I will tell hon. members a little tale. About a year ago I was a student and my wife was a student as well. We are both educated people. I have a master's degree. She was a lawyer in Turkey. All the same, we had a hard time making ends meet through these difficult economic times.

An organizer saw me in the summer of 2010 and asked me if I was interested in becoming a candidate for the NDP. Here I was, struggling to keep my business running, studying and taking care of my family. The party thought I might make a good candidate, so it approached me. I accepted, knowing that the campaign financing through the per vote subsidy would support me rather than having to raise my own money, which would have been an impossibility at that time, since I was working, studying and taking care of my family.

I clearly did not have the time to raise money while I was studying and doing all these things, so the elimination of the per vote subsidy might eliminate guys like me as candidates. Instead, they will prefer the professional politicians who have well-polished political machines and this will leave the grassroots voiceless and further alienate the people from the political process.

Voting and elections are part of the common good, so I do not understand why the Conservatives continue to deride the electoral process and thus show their contempt for the electoral process.

However, with that said, we will be in good shape to raise our own money as a party, living without the subsidy, but my fear is that it will discourage certain candidates, those who cannot get involved in the political process because they do not have the money.

There is nothing worse when one is broke to get hit up by a political party for money. I know this from experience. That is when an individual is earning \$25,000 a year and a political party says it

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needs help and asks if he or she has \$500 to give. Most Canadians do not have that money and they resent being asked for it.

That is why the subsidy is in place, so the costs of political activity are borne by the greater public for the greater good. Everyone pays, but those who do not have any money will not get dinged for this \$2 per vote. It will be borne by the more well off in the taxation system. That is what happens. Those who do not make enough money during the year do not have to pay for this. Those who are well off would end up paying this money through their taxes.

This is the way of the government. The Conservatives believe more in the prosperity of the few rather than the prosperity of all Canadians. They believe that the electoral and democratic system, through the per vote subsidy of our country, is not worth investing in.

I will leave this subject briefly and say that the government is also scattershot on the economy. The Conservatives continue to applaud their Minister of Finance, who was chosen by *Euromoney* magazine as the best finance minister in the world two years ago.

The current best finance minister in the world is Wayne Swan, a Labour brother from Australia. Why? Because he not only acted quickly on this year's economic downturn, but the one in 2008 as well.

Both times, Canada's Minister of Finance was asleep at the wheel. While he was reading *Forbes*, with his feet up on the desk in his fine tailored suit in the warmth of his leather and wood office, perhaps he could not hear the voices of our most poor from his Ottawa bubble. He waited too long before acting and it shows, because these measures in this bill are scattershot. They lack coherency.

That is why the government rests upon its platitudes. It says that it is leader of the G7, while ignoring that the top four countries in the World Economic Forum competitiveness report are not from the G7 at all. Why ignore these countries? Because countries like Switzerland, Sweden, Singapore, Finland invest in public transit. They have coherent plans. They have state-of-the-art infrastructure. Their governance models are orderly and transparent.

The solution of the government has been like the kid in class who neglects to study. He sits next to the smart kid and when he can peek at what the smart kid is doing, he cribs the smart kid's notes.

The small business tax credit was our idea, except our proposition is in a half measure.

● (1825)

The government's tax credit for small business will not be effective in helping small businesses. We proposed the \$4,500 tax credit for small businesses and a reduction in small business tax from 11% to 9%. Perhaps the government did not see that part when it was peeking over our shoulder.

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Regarding Montreal's infrastructure, we said that the Champlain Bridge needed to be built. We talked about the economic significance of the bridge and its contribution to productivity. Six months later I listened to the minister repeat my exact words to a room full of journalists. He also said it would not cost the taxpayers anything. I guess he missed part of our notes. We have done our homework on the way PPPs work and they often cost more than a regular procurement. There is no such thing as off-the-book accounting and the government should be transparent about that.

However, I guess when the Conservatives cribbed from our notes, they missed the substance of our argument. They prefer the comfort of their own ideology.

Let me remind the hon. members of the 12 pillars of the World Economic Forum's competitiveness index. I will open the answer book to give them a peek so perhaps they can create the jobs necessary to build this economy. We will give them the answers so we know they do not have to copy off of us.

The basic requirements of the 12 pillars are: institutions, infrastructure, macroeconomic environment, and health and primary education. These are the keys for factor-driven economies.

Efficiency enhancers are: higher education and training, goods market efficiency, labour market efficiency, financial market development, technological readiness, and market size. These are keys for efficiency-driven economies.

Innovation and sophistication factors are: business sophistication and innovation. These are key for innovation-driven economies, of which Canada is one.

The Conference Board of Canada identified weaknesses in these last two areas, business sophistication and innovation. That is why since 2009 Canada has slipped from sixth place to ninth place and in September of this year to twelfth place.

The member for Calgary Centre can cherry-pick the facts and figures in this report, but the fact remains that the stability of our financial system was not due to his government but the foundations built by Canadian governments of the past. That is a fact I will acknowledge to the third party in this House even though its last Prime Minister wished to change that system. We are glad he decided not to. Members can take credit where credit is due, but they must realize that it is a misleading practice to claim credit for something someone else has done.

Let us return to the weaknesses identified in the report, that being innovation and business sophistication. The report states:

—greater R and D spending and producing goods and services higher on the value chain, would enhance Canada's competitiveness and productive potential going into the future.

What is the government's answer to this criticism on competitiveness? It is to focus on export of raw materials like bitumen from the oil sands. To make it a priority to invest in basic—

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bruce Stanton):** Order. I would remind hon. members that in the course of their speeches it is always a good idea to look this way once in a while as I will give an indication as to how their time is proceeding.

**Mr. Deepak Obhrai (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, to be honest, it is rare that I listen to the NDP's economic policies. However, as I was listening to the member, what really surprised me was the point he made regarding political subsidy. He wants Canadian taxpayers to pay for his party. His party has difficulty raising money from the Canadian people. If people liked his party's policies they would give it money. When its members realize that is not a possibility, they want Canadian taxpayers to pay for their party.

What is even more interesting is the member mentioned that big corporations would be coming back and paying back. He forgot to look at the other side of the coin. There are limits regarding donations to political parties. Businesses are not allowed to donate to political parties. Unions and their buddies are not allowed to donate to them. That is why they are feeling the punch and why we see them crying about it.

• (1830)

**Mr. Jamie Nicholls:** Mr. Speaker, our party is in a fairly good position to raise its own money, so it will not be a problem for the party.

What I said was that the most disadvantaged members in our society may not be able to participate in the political process because they will not be able to afford it. Therefore, if political parties have to constantly hit up individuals for money, those who do not have the money or whose social situation is affected by the government's economic policies might resent the fact that a political party is asking them for money. Therefore, we see that the per-vote subsidy would allow those poorest members of society to take part in the political process.

**Mr. Don Davies (Vancouver Kingsway, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, first I want to congratulate my hon. colleague for what is one of the most thoughtful speeches I have heard delivered here from either side of the House. He talked about facts and developed arguments using logic that was respectful to all parties and history.

When I listen to the members opposite, what is always interesting is how rhetorical they get and substitute invective, such as name calling, for logic. My hon. colleague across just talked about us crying or something to that effect. What kind of childish argument is that?

Here are some facts. The two biggest deficits in Canadian history are Conservative: Michael Wilson, under the government of Brian Mulroney; and, the deficit last year of this current Minister of Finance.

What are the policies that led to our stable banking system? The Conservatives wanted banks to merge, to be deregulated and to sell insurance, all measures that were stopped and that Canada was thankful to not have in place to help us with the recession.

I ask my hon. colleague for his thoughts on the Conservatives' record and what he feels the NDP would do instead?



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**Mr. Jamie Nicholls:** Mr. Speaker, I am disturbed that the debate on this motion is being guillotined. We have time limits in the House. I am aware that I was not prevented from speaking, rather my speech was cut off in accordance with those time limits. However, I believe there are more comments of substance to be said about this legislation that might not be said due to time constraints.

To answer my hon. colleague's question, if we look at the economic record of NDP governments in Canada at the provincial level, we have shown ourselves to be fiscally responsible, fact-based and realistic about measures.

During the cuts to the transfers to provinces, in British Columbia Mike Harcourt's government did not reduce costs. It actually invested in infrastructure at that time. We now see that it is in a healthier position regarding its infrastructure.

There are many examples of NDP governments having been successful at managing the economy.

**Mr. Deepak Obhrai (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, it is an honour and a pleasure to rise and speak to this bill, a very important bill that talks about keeping Canada's economy and jobs market growing.

Members will remember quite clearly the recession of 2008. The government acted very strongly and brought in the first economic action plan, which included spending for infrastructure to ensure that there was money flowing into the country and that there were jobs.

The stimulus package worked all across the nation. It was a step that helped Canada weather the storm. I can say to all members that Canada, despite the fact of the global turmoil, weathered the storm very well.

Now we are coming to the same situation, due to the eurozone crisis and the instability in the U.S. market. We are again facing economic uncertainty, so the government has come forward, once more, with the second stage of the economic action plan which this bill is addressing.

When the first economic action plan was presented in the House, the NDP had the same arguments opposing it. The NDP opposed all the measures put into that action plan. Now those members are standing up and using the same arguments.

It is no surprise to anyone that members of the NDP are standing up again to oppose an economic action plan that works for Canada.

We hear the arguments made by the other side. The last speaker was talking about nitpicking. It is amazing. There is a recession in the world and this party is bringing bad news. Members of the NDP are saying that everything is going wrong and the sky is falling. It is the same thing they have always been saying. I have been sitting here, all these years, listening to this party giving the same arguments.

Despite the fact that some of the members have changed, nothing has changed in the NDP ideology. The NDP does not look at critical factors or what this bill will do. This bill addresses how we can get more people working. That is a key thing. Right now, as we speak, President Obama has a bill in the U.S.A. trying to get people back to work.

It is quite interesting that the NDP members will get up and talk about how we are losing jobs. Then they talk about the pipeline that is going to be built to the benefit of Canada. Who is opposing it? It is the NDP.

They will find some rationale, at any give time, to oppose anything that would benefit Canadians and the Canadian economy. Their rationale for always opposing everything is their ideology, which is big business, higher taxes, bigger taxes.

We just heard the NDP members talking about subsidies and how the taxpayers should pay for them, so they can go and collect money. I find it quite strange, but if they did make an effort to go out, they would find out what Canadians are actually saying. This time Canadians are saying that politicians should not get free money from taxpayers.

It is important to recognize what this bill is all about. It is about creating an economic environment that is there for businesses, big and small, to have the opportunity to hire people.

• (1835)

The bill talks about training people to ensure that our workforce is capable. People who have lost their jobs can get training and go back into the workforce. The important point here is to get people to work. That is what the NDP should understand.

There are provisions in the bill to help. Maybe the members of the NDP should see that this would help Canadians and maybe they should support this for a change. Now that they are the official opposition, they should take a rational look at it and support those measures. After they support it, they can come back and give their ideas on what would help Canadians. Working together is how we will get out of the recession.

My friend from Winnipeg talked about the ostrich with its head in the sand. That applies to the members of the NDP. They have their head in the sand and do not see what is happening globally. There is a crisis in Europe and in the United States. We do not live on an island. We are an integrated economy with the world. The impact of these things are being felt in this country.

A recession is going on. This is not a good time. It is not a time when figures are flying high and the economy is booming. The economy is not booming anywhere around the world. There are danger signs all around the world and we need to take steps to create an environment that will enable Canadians to get jobs. A Canadian who is willing to work can feed his family, take care of his children and send his children to school, and all those things that make societies very strong. However, the NDP would never find anything good. It is always negative.

In conclusion, I ask my friends on the other side to look at this carefully, as there are excellent points in this, and to support it because it is for the good of the country. If they have any better ideas, we would be more than happy to listen to them and work together. However, at the end of the day, we are talking about Canadians going back to work and a sound economy.

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● (1840)

[Translation]

**Ms. Ève Péclet (La Pointe-de-l'Île, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I was actually quite surprised that the hon. member opposite was so upset when asking the question.

[English]

It is outrageous that taxpayers must pay for political parties. What is more outrageous is that the government is saying that taxpayers need to pay for prisons, jets and all kinds of right-wing policies. This is outrageous.

Why are these policies part of an economic plan for a country that is in a recession?

**Mr. Deepak Obhrai:** Mr. Speaker, I should not be surprised by that question from the NDP.

Are we talking about jets? No. We are talking about arming our armed forces and getting them the best equipment for the future. We are talking about the future defence of this country. When we talk about our crime bill, it is about making our streets safe. That is what Canadians want and that is why Canadians chose us. Maybe she should consider that.

**Mr. Marc Garneau (Westmount—Ville-Marie, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I am not sure whether I want to thank the hon. member for his speech. It was not really a sales pitch for the budget. It was really more a diatribe against the NDP. However, he did say somewhere in there that he would be glad to hear some useful ideas.

I will give him this idea. There are a number of tax credits in this plan but they are non-refundable. I would make the suggestion that they should be refundable so that the least fortunate, the lowest income Canadian, would actually be able to benefit from them. I think that is a good suggestion. I would like to hear what he has to say about it.

**Mr. Deepak Obhrai:** Mr. Speaker, at least we have a suggestion, as opposed to criticism, from the other party. It was not a diatribe against the NDP. It is the NDP that is opposing Canada's action plan. However, he has given us a suggestion and we will look into it to see if it does benefit. We may come back with good news, who knows.

● (1845)

**Mr. David Sweet (Ancaster—Dundas—Flamborough—Westdale, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I have listened to the NDP for the entire day and the last member actually talked about cherry-picking the facts. Who are the New Democrats going to believe? Do they believe the OECD, the IMF, *Forbes* magazine, Statistics Canada? All of these organizations have talked about the success of Canada through this global downturn and the fact that we added 600,000 new jobs.

The previous NDP member, again cherry-picking, mentioned that the report said that we needed more research and development. What he did not say was that was in the private sector. We lead, per capita, as far as government spending goes, in research and development.

I want to ask my colleague if he thinks that we should replace what the private sector should be doing with taxpayer money?

**Mr. Deepak Obhrai:** Mr. Speaker, first he asked what the NDP believes in, which reports or anything else. I will be very blunt. The

NDP will believe in any report that is negative to Canada. That is how it cherry picks.

In answer to my dear colleague's question, it is very simple. There needs to be a good balance between the government and the private sector, but, most important, we know that it is the private sector that will carry the most important innovation and investment. Therefore, our job is to create that environment.

**Hon. Lynne Yelich (Minister of State (Western Economic Diversification), CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to stand in the House today to speak to Bill C-13, the keeping Canada's economy and jobs growing act. Our government has made Canada's economy our number one priority. We have been keenly focused on creating jobs and providing the right conditions for economic growth. We recognize the economy is what Canadians are concerned about and we are working hard on their behalf.

The bill that we are debating is an important part of the next phase of Canada's economic action plan. It builds on the tremendous work done by our government to secure Canada's economic success. There are many positive aspects of this bill that are deserving of mention and that I am pleased to address. Most important, this bill is a clear plan to promote job creation. It is a clear plan to create economic growth. It provides support for our communities. It helps families and invests in education and training. Not only does this bill address these many important issues, but it does so while respecting taxpayers, something that has been the hallmark of our government.

This bill contains several measures that would encourage the hiring of more Canadians and create necessary jobs. It would provide a temporary hiring credit for small businesses, the very companies that are so vital to building our economy. This bill would reduce red tape because reducing red tape makes it easier for Canadians to get jobs and keep them. We are also supporting young entrepreneurs by providing \$20 million to enable the Canadian Youth Business Foundation to continue assisting young entrepreneurs.

These initiatives—

**Mr. Scott Andrews:** Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. Since the government put closure on this bill, one would think members would be here to listen to it. There should be a quorum call right now.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bruce Stanton):** I am seeing quorum.

The hon. Minister of State for Western Economic Diversification.

**Hon. Lynne Yelich:** Mr. Speaker, that is interesting that one single Liberal in the House can call quorum and—

**An hon.member:** That's democracy in action.



*Government Orders*

**Hon. Lynne Yelich:** One single Liberal is all there was.

Anyhow, Mr. Speaker, back to this exciting budget. This is exciting because these initiatives are simply a handful of the many positive ones contained within this bill that would help create jobs.

Furthermore, I am very pleased to see that the bill is striving to create the right conditions for Canada's economic success by not just creating jobs but also working to respect the taxpayers. We are a government that is working for all Canadians and we are committed to keeping taxes low. In fact, under this government, taxes have been reduced 120 times since 2006. We are continuing to keep taxes low because, unlike the opposition, we know that higher taxes would kill jobs. It is a fragile economic recovery and it sets Canadian families back.

I know our government's tax relief for families and job-creating businesses has been extremely important in my riding, and I am proud of our record on that issue.

The bill goes far in providing critical support for our communities. In particular, I am pleased to see the commitment to legislate a permanent annual investment of \$2 billion in a tax fund, the gas tax fund, that would provide predictable infrastructure funding over the long term.

I believe that this builds upon the many projects that our government invested in during the first phase of Canada's economic action plan. These were important and necessary projects. They created jobs and they contributed to economic growth. Many of these projects will be well used for many years by communities across the country.

I would like to bring to the attention of my colleagues the many measures in this bill designed to assist Canadian families. Canadian families stand to gain much from this next phase of Canada's economic action plan. In particular, there is the new family caregiver tax credit that would assist those Canadians already striving to care for the infirm and their dependent relatives.

As well, Bill C-13 would remove the limit on the amount of eligible expenses caregivers can claim under the medical expense tax credit in respect of financially dependent relatives.

Finally, we are introducing the children's arts tax credit for recreational and developmental children's programs.

We understand how difficult making ends meet can be for Canadian families. Our government desires to make life easier for families, which is precisely what the initiatives in this budget are outlined to do.

I wish to speak to something of tremendous importance in my riding in the province of Saskatchewan that is addressed in this budget. It is the important measures in Bill C-13 that invest in education and training.

Our government recognizes the importance of a well-educated and talented workforce in today's modern economy, especially within the context of a highly competitive, global economy where education and skills are of the utmost necessity to guarantee success. Bill C-13 invests in education and in training so that Canadian workers are the best equipped to tackle the challenges of today's work environment.

We are ready to build on Canada's reputation as a world leader with a strong, well-trained and well-educated workforce that is flexible to meet the labour needs.

To accomplish this, I am proud to see that Bill C-13 contains a number of important measures. In particular, we are investing hundreds of millions of dollars in research and development, in higher education and in new technologies. We are extending tax relief for skills certification exams by extending the scope of the tuition tax credit. We are forgiving loans for new doctors and nurses who choose to live and work in remote and rural areas, which frequently were underserved. We are doubling the in-study income exemption so students can earn more while at school without negatively impacting the loans. The last measure alone would assist nearly 100,000 students.

These are investments so fundamentally important to Canada's economic prosperity that we will see benefits not just now but in the future and for many years into the future.

In my home province of Saskatchewan, investments are both very necessary and are extremely welcome.

•(1850)

Our government fully understands the importance of remaining competitive in the global economy. We recognize the role played by investments in innovation and education. The bill, the next phase of Canada's economic action plan, is clear and concise. It is a plan for tackling the challenges faced by Canada's economy.

It is important that the bill be passed. It is important because our government can then continue to build on the highly successful first phase of Canada's economic action plan. The government remains committed to the principles that served Canadians well during the recent global economic downturn. We have emerged from that downturn and our economy is showing very positive results. It is necessary that we be allowed to continue down this path. In the next phase, we will continue. We will continue to support job creation. We will lay the groundwork for economic growth and, importantly, we will do this while assisting families, investing in education and innovation, and supporting communities and keeping taxes low.

I am proud of the work we have done. I am proud to be supporting the bill. I am thankful for the opportunity to speak.

•(1855)

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Raymond Côté (Beauport—Limoilou, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I listened very attentively to the two speeches of the members opposite and I am disappointed to see them clinging to analyses based on data from two, three or four years ago. This gives results that may not still be valid. If I had applied the same logic, I would have given up before the election campaign had even begun and I would have never won my seat.

### *Adjournment Proceedings*

In my work as the small business critic, I apply a detailed analysis of the current reality. That is exactly what I did during the last election campaign to the point where I was practically announcing that I had won.

I am trying to understand something. I was able to beat my Conservative opponent, and my Bloc Québécois opponent finished third despite the system of public financing of parties. The system works and it is fair. Why is the government trying to go backward so that elections can be bought?

[English]

**Hon. Lynne Yelich:** Mr. Speaker, if the member is asking if public financing helped him get elected, I am not sure if that is the reason he was elected. I do not believe that is the reason any of us were elected. We were elected because we had good platforms. I do not know why the member was elected, but we on this side of the House were elected because we had a platform. We had an economic action plan that in a time of global uncertainty has been what Canadians have wanted. They wanted to have financial security. They also wanted to have safe communities, something that we have been offering families in particular. We have dealt with the provinces and fixed the fiscal imbalance. As everyone knows, there was an imbalance there and we fixed it through our transfers, making sure there are always transfers available for the health and social needs of our provinces.

**Ms. Kirsty Duncan (Etobicoke North, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, this week is Feeding Toronto's Hungry Students Week. We feed 110,000 children every morning, but some 40% of elementary students and 62% of secondary school students do not eat a nutritious breakfast. One in five Canadian children lives below the poverty line, which can lead to poor nutritional status and poor health outcomes. Hungry children cannot learn. Their learning capabilities are affected by how recently they have eaten. Malnutrition in early life can limit long-term intellectual development. The right to safe and adequate food is a right of every individual.

Does the hon. member think the government should be working with the provinces and territories to establish a national nutrition program so that no child goes to school hungry?

**Hon. Lynne Yelich:** Mr. Speaker, our government has done much for food safety.

Our government has provided \$100 million on a cash basis over five years for targeted investments in inspector training, additional science capacity, and electronic tools to support the work of front-line inspectors. Canadians will benefit from this improved safety.

We also support agriculture. It is important to provide safe food to our families in urban and rural areas.

**Mr. Chris Alexander (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of National Defence, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I would submit that perhaps one of the reasons that many of the members opposite were elected is that in certain constituencies voters were tired of the Bloc Québécois.

It is clear from the speeches we have heard today that the NDP has not yet got its act together to put together an economic policy.

The member for Vaudreuil-Soulanges went to great lengths to outline the 12 factors underpinning competitiveness according to the

World Economic Forum. He did not mention that virtually all of them are referred to in Canada's economic action plan, nor did he mention that the World Economic Forum has rated our financial system the best in the world.

The member did say that many of the ideas we put in our budget and our economic action plan were stolen from the NDP. We know that is not true, but would the minister not agree that on the opposition backbenches, there are some signs of hope and that maybe a rebellion will eventually open up against their front bench—

• (1900)

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bruce Stanton):** Order, please. We need some time for the minister of state to respond.

**Hon. Lynne Yelich:** Mr. Speaker, I am certain they will. Every idea we have, such as supporting job creation, strengthening our families and communities, investing in the economy, and the economic action plan that we provided for Canadians, are things that the NDP is demanding that we do. I am sure those members will be voting for our economic action plan.

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## ADJOURNMENT PROCEEDINGS

[English]

A motion to adjourn the House under Standing Order 38 deemed to have been moved.

**Mr. Randall Garrison (Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I relish this opportunity to stand and talk again about a topic that I raised in the House on September 27, which was Canada's Asia Pacific strategy.

As a result of my own experiences working in the Asia Pacific region over the years, I have a continuing interest in this topic. I worked and lived in Indonesia, I worked and lived in the Philippines. I have done study tours and other kinds of exchanges and projects in other places in the Asia Pacific region. However, my specific reason for raising this topic was sparked by my attendance at the Business Council of B.C. Asia Pacific conference, which was called "Realizing Canada's Asia Pacific Opportunity".

I would say, with regret, I was the only member of Parliament who was at this conference in Vancouver. Because the House was in session, we could not all be there, but it would have been very educational I think, particularly for members of the government, to be there and hear what was said about its Asia Pacific strategy.

This was a gathering of business leaders, not leftists, not critics of the government, but people working in business in the Asia Pacific region. The Minister of Heritage did come and give a short speech about the Asia Pacific strategy, but as I said, otherwise I was the only one there through the conference.



*Adjournment Proceedings*

The keynote speaker was the president of the Asia Pacific Foundation, Mr. Yuen Pau Woo, who complimented the government on two parts of its Asia Pacific strategy. He said that it had done a good job in expanding our forestry exports, in particular to China. He said that the government had a good focus on infrastructure development to help improve our port facilities to encourage trade. However, what he went on to say that this was not enough for a true strategy to develop Canada's trade relations over the next years with the Asia Pacific. He emphasized that there was a real need for an Asia Pacific strategy which focused on human capacity development.

He was really talking about three things.

First, he said that Canada needed to identify and build on its comparative strengths. He said that the government seemed to believe it had done that at the Asia Pacific strategy when it focused on energy and resources. However, what he said, very interestingly, was he thought we were missing the most important comparative advantage that we had in Asia, and that was the depth of our human connections. In Canada we have a very large Chinese Canadian community. We have a very old Japanese Canadian community. We have a very new and growing Filipino Canadian community. On the west coast, we have a very strong Korean Canadian business community.

He said that the narrow focus on infrastructure and resources missed the biggest opportunity we had, which is to develop and strengthen those personal contacts that will actually lead to further business opportunities.

The second thing he said was that Canada was failing to recognize Asia as the region which was the new power centre of the world and that we needed to develop our cultural and not just our trade understanding of Asia.

Third, very specifically in the area of human capacity building, he said that Canada needed to build our network of human relationships. We do that through language training, cross-cultural communication training, international business education and in building those enduring human relationships, through exchange of international students, through study tours. Those kinds of things were completely absent from the government's Asia Pacific strategy.

Therefore, I rose to ask the question of the minister as to why we had this narrow focus and when would the government turn to this broader human capacity and relationship building strategy that business leaders so overwhelmingly endorsed in Vancouver on September 23.

● (1905)

**Mr. Randy Kamp (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans and for the Asia-Pacific Gateway, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I, too, lived in the Philippines, so I welcome the member to this place.

Our government is committed to protecting and strengthening the long-term financial security of hard-working Canadians. We believe that to be one of our main focuses. We continue to focus on the economy, creating jobs and economic growth to benefit hard-working Canadians. That is why we are continuing to deliver free trade leadership.

Our Conservative government and most Canadians understand that international trade is a kitchen table issue. What I mean by this is that Canadians intuitively understand that expanded trade is the key to their long-term financial security.

Despite the NDP's ideological opposition to free trade, we will take advantage of trade opportunities that are crucial to Canada's long-term economic success.

Trade accounts for almost 60% of our annual GDP, and one in five Canadian jobs is directly or indirectly dependent on trade. That is why our government is committed to securing and deepening access to traditional markets, like the United States, and broadening and expanding access to more markets, like the European Union, India and the other fast-growing countries of Asia and the Americas.

Asia is projected to account for half of the global gross domestic product in the coming decades and we are witnessing dramatic growth in our trade with this region.

Our exports to China have surged some 70% in the past half decade and China is now Canada's second largest merchandise trading partner and our third largest export market. China is now the world's second largest economy after the United States, therefore, it is important that we continue to strengthen our commercial trading relationship with this powerhouse market in order to create opportunities for Canadian businesses, workers and their families.

That is why we are focusing on the Asia-Pacific gateway and corridor initiative. As the demand for Canadian exports to Asia-Pacific markets continues to grow, so do the opportunities for Canadian workers and companies. This innovative approach to the transportation network brings together the key transportation, labour and logistics providers across our supply chains to facilitate pan-Pacific trade.

We have partnered with all four western provinces, municipalities and private sector partners to support strategic infrastructure projects with over \$3.5 billion in the Asia-Pacific gateway. This includes federal contributions of over \$1.4 billion. These investments are saving time and money for businesses on both sides of the Pacific, resulting in Canadian companies tapping into new and expanded markets. This will generate new business opportunities and will create thousands of jobs for Canadians by increasing our trade and related services.

By strengthening our overall transportation system, we are improving how we move freight from North America westward across the Pacific to Asian nations.

Equally important, we are making it easier for people to travel to and from Canada through liberalized air agreements with Asian countries, such as China, Japan and the Republic of Korea. Indeed, one of Asia's largest airlines, China Southern Airlines, recently launched a direct service from Guangzhou, China to Vancouver.

Last, budget 2011 allocates \$10 million over two years to develop and implement an international education strategy that will reinforce Canada as a country of choice to study and conduct world-class research.

*Adjournment Proceedings*

Innovative and outward-looking colleges and universities are key partners in developing a diverse, skilled and internationally focused workforce. This international education strategy will strengthen our engagement with emerging economies and ensure greater collaboration between Canadian and foreign institutions.

**Mr. Randall Garrison:** Mr. Speaker, I welcome the parliamentary secretary's comments and his discussion of international education initiatives.

There are three institutions in greater Victoria, one and a half of them in my riding, since one has two campuses. We have really been providing leadership in the area of international education. We have the Peter B Gustavson School of Business at the University of Victoria with its very innovative international business specialization in its MBA program.

We have the Royal Roads University, which is entirely in my riding, with its BA in international hotel management, an MA in international intercultural communication and an MA in global management.

Finally, where I taught for 20 years, we have Camosun College with an Asia-Pacific program that tries to engage first and second year students in the Asia-Pacific region.

The problem is that the government talks a good line on the international educational aspect but, in the Asia-Pacific strategy, the funding for those initiatives is missing and a long commitment to growing those relationships and that understanding is narrowed down to infrastructure and resource trade.

I would like to see the government's strategy expanded along the lines of the speech given by the president of the Asia-Pacific Foundation in Vancouver.

• (1910)

**Mr. Randy Kamp:** Mr. Speaker, we welcome that advice from my colleague across the way.

Many of those institutions are under provincial jurisdiction, so I hope he also shares that advice with our colleagues on the provincial side.

I will say again, though, that our government has seen the need to invest in the infrastructure projects under our direct jurisdiction that are going to help increase trade, jobs, and the exchange of goods and services and ideas across the Asia-Pacific Gateway.

We are working hard to seize on every opportunity to expand our trade and cultural linkages with our international partners in the Asia-Pacific region and we will continue to do so.

## NATIONAL DEFENCE

**Mr. Scott Andrews (Avalon, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure to be in the House this evening to follow up on my questions to the Minister of National Defence a few weeks ago. The questions were on the minister's precedent-setting opportunity when he called a search and rescue helicopter off the tarmac in Gander to come and pluck him out of a fishing lodge on the Gander River.

We see the scarce resources of our search and rescue capabilities following the closing of sub-centres in St. John's and in Quebec City, yet the minister, at his will, can get search and rescue to come take

him off a river in Gander. He was only 12 nautical miles from Gander. It was not as if he was deep in the woods and had to plan on taking half a day to get out of there. He was only 12 nautical miles from the airport.

One of the questions is about how he got to the lodge in the first place. Did he come in on a boat or in a quad? He could have gotten back in the same way within 20 minutes. He just wanted to impress his fishing buddies.

To elaborate on my question, I know the parliamentary secretary is going to talk about training and how we all participate in parliamentary internship programs and how a great program it is. I think it is great. I have done it myself. I spent a whole three days with the Canadian Forces at CFB Greenwood and I had a great time. I learned a lot.

However, how can the minister learn anything in 30 short minutes? He obviously did not have time to see the search and rescue capabilities. They just came and hoisted him off the river and then brought him back to Gander. He did not really have time to participate in an exercise.

The minister had called Gander. CFB Gander said it was way out of protocol. He was not satisfied with that, so then he called their superiors and got them to call Gander to force the search and rescue plane to come pluck him off the river, which was absolutely abusing his position as minister.

These questions need to be answered. Canadians deserve a lot more from their elected officials in regard to this.

Another thing is that the minister is going to say he cut his vacation short and that he had to go to an important announcement. That is fine, but announcements do not just pop up overnight; announcements are planned well in advance. The minister knew full well that he had to get back for an announcement. He was not cutting his vacation short.

Let us get into the details. When was this announcement planned that he had to get to all of a sudden, and had to call in a Challenger jet? The Challenger was waiting for him, and it was total abuse of taxpayers' money.

The other part of my question was about how the minister did a phony spending announcement during the election. The day before the election was called, the minister flew to St. John's, and \$20,000 later, he made an announcement. If it was not so ironic, it would be funny, because back in 2005 this same member, the member for Central Nova, asked the same question. He said,

Mr. Speaker, while the Prime Minister spent the summer burning jet fuel in the Challenger making phony announcements, his cabinet ministers were touring the country in limos tanked up on taxpayer dollars.

The same guy did the same thing five years later, but it is okay now. Now that the Conservatives are in power, they are saying they are allowed to do this.

Is it not pretty hypocritical that five or six years ago in this place, the minister criticized the government of the day for doing that, but now that the Conservatives are in, they can get away with it? What is the real deal here, Mr. Parliamentary Secretary?



*Adjournment Proceedings*

●(1915)

**Mr. Chris Alexander (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of National Defence, CPC):** Mr. Speaker—

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bruce Stanton):** I will just make the subtle reminder to the member for Avalon that normally questions are directed through the Chair to other hon. members.

The hon. Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of National Defence.

**Mr. Chris Alexander:** Mr. Speaker, I would like to begin a substantive answer by simply noting that the low tone of the remarks we just heard in that rant, which the hon. member tried to qualify as a question, is what gives some hon. members, and certainly the party to which the hon. member belongs, a bad name in the eyes of Canadians. I would put the hon. member on notice that this kind of unfactual insinuation is not going to wash with Canadians. It did not wash in the last election and it will not wash in the future.

However, I would like to thank him for giving me the opportunity to set the record straight on the use of government aircraft. The Minister of National Defence is the lead minister for search and rescue in this country, and he attaches enormous importance to his role in this respect and to understanding the work that is done each and every day by the men and women involved in search and rescue, including by the men and women of the Canadian Forces, who are just one element of the overall solution.

Canadians are fortunate to have one of the most effective search and rescue systems in the world. We can be forgiven for forgetting that fact in the wake of dozens of questions by the other side casting aspersions and alleging abuse that is simply not there.

A vast network operates across this country to ensure that appropriate resources are available to respond to incidents that may arise anywhere. We have 18 million square kilometres of responsibility. The hon. member may know that is 13% of the earth's surface, an area of land and sea greater than the size of continental Europe.

The Canadian Forces and the Canadian Coast Guard work very closely together to coordinate responses to more than 8,000 incidents per year. The forces are proud of what they do and they take advantage of all opportunities to welcome senior officials and government members to showcase their capabilities, as the member well knows. I am grateful to him for coming clean in saying that he took a trip with the 103 Search and Rescue Squadron in Gander, Newfoundland in July 2010, a trip that was even longer than the minister's trip, which was under an hour we are told.

However, there has been no question from this side or any side about the appropriateness of that. Indeed, members of this House have a duty to understand the operations of the Canadian Forces, above all, the members of the Standing Committee on National Defence. And the Minister of National Defence, with statutory responsibility for these forces, has a responsibility to know their work intimately. Fortunately, he does and is dedicated to his job; he does not take it lightly. And, fortunately, he has committed to doing this job seriously and to knowing the work involved as no other minister in recent years has known it.

While the 103 Squadron was pleased to have the opportunity to demonstrate its capabilities, obviously the visit would have been terminated had an incident arisen and those resources been required elsewhere. I do not want to single out the member. Many members have taken part in these sorts of demonstrations. However, for the Minister of National Defence, there is a special responsibility, and the government is committed to ensuring that the Canadian Forces have the people, equipment, infrastructure, and readiness required to defend Canada and Canadians, including in the field of search and rescue.

On the Challenger flights, I just have one thing to say. The hon. member opposite, representing the great riding of Avalon, should know better than to ask about this issue when he represents a party that had the highest rate of use of Challengers, and, probably, abuse from time to time, in Canadian history. This government has reduced that rate of use by 80%, and I think those facts speak for themselves.

●(1920)

**Mr. Scott Andrews (Avalon, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, that is quite rich. I say to the hon. member that we will not be bullied, and if he wishes to refer to what is "unfactual", the facts are that the minister was on a vacation. The facts are that the minister called a search and rescue plane to come and remove him from that vacation. Those are the facts of the matter.

Also, the member should get his facts straight. I was at CFB Greenwood when I did an exercise that took three days. I spent a whole day with the search and rescue squadron at Greenwood. We did daily briefings. They showed us all of their gear and their exercises and maneuvers, and those kinds of things. It was not done by a phone call from the minister to come to pick him up and to spend a half-hour of his time with the search and rescue squadron in Gander.

So the member should not try to pull the wool over our eyes that this was all planned and all good and that they were doing it all for the great cause of our Canadian Forces. That is absolute malarkey.

**Mr. Chris Alexander:** Mr. Speaker, I think it is clear to all of us in the House at this point that the member has lost his sense of perspective on this issue. He has not as yet answered the question as to why it is fine for him and many other members to follow the rules, participate in the search and rescue exercise, but not fine for the Minister of National Defence, who is responsible for search and rescue in our country, to do the same.

We on this side can well understand why the NDP asks so much about this. It opposes so much of what the Canadian Forces does, such as the operation in Libya, the operation in Afghanistan, Canada's economic action plan, the procurement of equipment, the minister's commitment to doing his duty to fallen soldiers.

*Adjournment Proceedings*

What we cannot understand on this side of the House is why a Liberal member, whose government used these assets five times more than this government, is questioning the commitment of the Minister of National Defence to knowing his job as the lead minister on search and rescue and his minimal use of Challenger aircraft to get to places in Canada.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bruce Stanton):** The motion to adjourn the House is now deemed to have been adopted. Accordingly the House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 10 a.m. pursuant to Standing Order 24(1).

(The House adjourned at 7:22 p.m.)

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OFFICIAL REPORT  
(HANSARD)

Friday, October 7, 2011



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Speaker: The Honourable Andrew Scheer

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# HOUSE OF COMMONS

Friday, October 7, 2011

The House met at 10 a.m.

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*Prayers*

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## GOVERNMENT ORDERS

● (1005)

[English]

### KEEPING CANADA'S ECONOMY AND JOBS GROWING ACT

The House resumed from October 6 consideration of the motion that Bill C-13, An Act to implement certain provisions of the 2011 budget as updated on June 6, 2011 and other measures, be read the second time and referred to a committee.

**Ms. Kirsty Duncan (Etobicoke North, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I rise today to speak to Bill C-13. On behalf of my riding of Etobicoke North, the beautiful community where I was born and raised, I must first fight for jobs. It is an absolute priority for me, my office and our community. It is heartening to see some modest employment growth in today's statistics but it does not bring us back to where we were before the recession.

I want members to know that we have helped many residents with resumé's. I personally spend hours correcting each line of cover letters and resumé's. We help with job-finding skills. We send people to career agencies and we help find them jobs.

I am particularly proud that we have secured a new jobs program to help more people in our community find work. However, it is not enough. The reality is that more Canadians face economic insecurity compared to a few short years ago. This threatens Canada's economic growth and fiscal balance. We need concrete proposals to stimulate job creation right away.

Twenty per cent of my riding is engaged in manufacturing, the second-highest percentage for the country's entire 308 ridings. What new support can the government offer young Canadians? This past summer, it was heartbreaking to meet with so many young graduates who were distraught because they were unable to find work. Many of these graduates were the first person in their family to go to college and university. The only thing harder than meeting with the graduates was meeting with their grandparents who begged for help to find their grandchildren a job. We must reduce the worst youth unemployment rate in a generation.

We must also build the jobs of the future. This means we must shift to a green economy to stimulate growth, create new jobs, eradicate poverty and limit humanity's ecological footprint. It is no longer a choice between saving our economy and saving the environment. It is a choice between being a producer and a consumer in the old economy and being a leader in a new economy. It is a choice between decline and prosperity.

The government should work in partnership with provinces, territories, municipalities, labour organizations, industry sectors, first nations and others to develop a national sustainable energy and economic growth strategy to position Canada to succeed in the global economy. It should develop a clean energy employment transition for Canada with goals for 2015, 2020, 2025 and 2030. This strategy should include skills development, training programs and certification courses.

I will now address environmental, economic and human costs. Climate change is our most pressing environmental issue, perhaps the defining issue of our generation, and it requires both moral responsibility and intergenerational responsibility. Yet the government failed to mention the issue in the throne speech.

This week we learned that the government has reduced climate change reductions by a shocking 90% since 2007. More stringent action to reduce greenhouse gas emissions cannot be postponed much longer. Otherwise the opportunity to keep the average global temperature rise below 2°C, relative to the pre-industrial level, is in danger. Serious impacts are associated with approaching or exceeding this limit, including the increased frequency and severity of extreme weather events, shifts in growing seasons and sea level rise.

The National Round Table on the Environment and the Economy predicts that climate change could cost Canadians between \$21 billion and \$43 billion per year by 2050.

### *Government Orders*

Our capacity for managing the impacts to come is adaptation. While it is not cost-free it is a cost-effective way to alleviate some of those impacts. I must then ask why the government is cutting climate impacts and adaptation research at Environment Canada. The group was started 17 years ago. It performs groundbreaking research by examining how climate change affects agriculture, human health and water quality in Canada. Some of its scientists shared part of the 2007 Nobel Peace Prize on climate change.

My concern is that the government wants as little as possible to do with climate change and wants to pass the buck to the provinces and the municipalities. The reality is that we need research governance arrangements on adaptation at all scales.

I will now turn to human costs and what failure to take preventive action would mean.

Governments worldwide are concerned with the rising tide of dementia. Some 500,000 Canadians have Alzheimer's disease or related dementia. Some 71,000 are under the age of 65 years and 72% are women. Today in Canada one person is diagnosed with Alzheimer's disease and related dementias every five minutes. The human cost is huge. The economic cost is \$15 billion. In 30 years it will be one person every two minutes and a cost of \$153 billion.

It is my absolute hope that the health committee will reconstitute the Subcommittee of Neurological Disease which I founded in the last Parliament and will bring back the report which the subcommittee passed.

Moreover, will the government commit to a national brain strategy? Will it commit to a national brain health awareness month and a national year of the brain to raise awareness of brain health in Canada? Will it commit to a national Alzheimer's office within the Public Health Agency of Canada to reduce the rising tide of Alzheimer's disease and related dementias, and provide a national plan with specific goals and an annual report to Parliament? Will it take necessary measures to accelerate the discovery and development of treatments that would prevent, halt or reverse the course of dementia? Will it encourage greater investment in all areas of research?

If we could merely slow the onset of dementia by two years for each affected Canadian we would see a return on investment of 15,000% over a 30 year research effort.

I will finish by tackling another devastating neurological disease, that being multiple sclerosis. It affects 55,000 to 75,000 Canadians, of whom 400 die each year from the disease, and many take their own life. The suicide rate in MS patients is seven times that of the national population.

In May 2010, my colleague from St. Paul's and I brought the fight for clinical trials and a registry for chronic cerebrospinal venous insufficiency, CCSVI, to Parliament.

Almost a year later, in March 2011, the government announced a registry, although it will not actually start until July 2012.

In June 2011, at last the government announced clinical trials.

I want to be clear. All we have right now is announcements. What we need is action. Canadians with MS cannot afford to wait.

Instead of tracking patients who have had the CCSVI procedure and developing the most appropriate scales to measure any health impacts following treatment, MS patients were left with no follow up and important data was lost post procedure at one, three, six, twelve and twenty-four months.

Since when do scientists fail to collect data or, worse, choose not to gather evidence?

The CIHR is currently recommending phase I or phase II clinical trials for CCSVI.

I would argue that there is no need for a phase I trial, which is usually undertaken to assess safety. Angioplasty is an accepted standard of care practice in Canada.

I would, therefore, suggest that we need an adaptive phase II or phase III trial, for example, clinical trials for the CCSVI procedure in multiple centres across Canada.

I will finish by thanking the people in my riding, as well as the stakeholders in the environment, health and particularly neurological disease.

Finally, I would like all of the people who are living with MS to know that they inspire me every day.

• (1010)

[Translation]

**Mr. John Weston (West Vancouver—Sunshine Coast—Sea to Sky Country, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I have no doubt that my colleague is sincere and dedicated to her riding. At the beginning of her speech she said that we are not back to where we were before the recession. We know that we lost 490,000 jobs during the recession.

• (1015)

[English]

We have created 600,000 new jobs with the economic action plan. These concrete results are due to lower taxes and the specific steps we have taken which have been acknowledged around the world. As well, our Minister of Finance has been acknowledged around the world.

Would my colleague from Etobicoke North comment on the number of jobs that have been created through the economic action plan? Will she be supporting its next phase?

**Ms. Kirsty Duncan:** Mr. Speaker, the reality is that in my riding jobs are a priority.



I went to a graduation and heard in the speech given by a vaudeictorian a poem by Dylan Thomas paraphrased, "Rage, rage if people do not come from the right community or do not have the opportunity to get a job". The government has missed out on opportunities for creating jobs for Canadians.

The government missed opportunities contained within the stimulus package regarding jobs, impacts on the environment, and greening the economy. According to HSBC, in 2009 the Government of Canada invested \$3 billion in green stimulus spending. However, Germany invested \$14 billion, the United States invested \$112 billion and China invested \$221 billion in green infrastructure and in the process created thousands of new green jobs and improved competitiveness.

In 2010 McAllister said that 84% of Canadian thought leaders give poor ratings to Canada's dependence on fossil fuels and carbon pricing. We need a national sustainable energy strategy and job strategy.

**Ms. Laurin Liu (Rivière-des-Mille-Îles, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, we all know that Canada has been lacking in green infrastructure. I listened with interest to the member's statements on the green economy. I would ask her to elaborate on how many jobs we have missed out on due to the lack of a green economy in Canada, as well as the government's unwillingness to move toward a green economy.

**Ms. Kirsty Duncan:** Mr. Speaker, Canada must absolutely move toward a green economy, develop a transition strategy and track the jobs that would create.

I stress that climate change is not just an environmental issue but also a human rights issue, a right to live, an international security issue and a justice issue. In other words, those suffering the most have the least responsibility. In any struggle it is important to listen to the front lines, for example, the aboriginal people and those living in the Canadian Arctic. If people are being impacted by climate change they should be meaningfully involved in Canada's processes and negotiations. As well, the government must be accountable to those people who are impacted.

The government is now cutting the climate impacts and adaptation research group in Environment Canada, which performs world-leading research in adaptation. Why would it cut these Nobel Prize winning scientists' research when the national round table has predicted that climate change could cost Canadians \$21 billion to \$43 billion per year by 2050?

**Mr. Bryan Hayes (Sault Ste. Marie, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I rise today with honour and a great sense of pride in representing the people of Sault Ste. Marie. It is a privilege to be here today to address the House of Commons in my maiden speech.

At this time I would like to congratulate our member of provincial Parliament, David Oraziotti, on being re-elected last night. The red tie is not in honour of him, it is in honour of our troops.

I would like to begin by thanking the numerous volunteers who worked tirelessly and diligently on my campaign. It was the collective effort of all those involved that resulted in my electoral victory in my first-ever attempt at seeking to represent Sault Ste. Marie and Canada at the federal level. Few who try succeed, and I

am truly humbled by this amazing opportunity to make a difference in the lives of those whom I serve. I will not take it for granted.

As parliamentarians, we collectively give thanks to God in this place every day. I would like to thank God for allowing me the privilege of serving the people of Sault Ste. Marie and Him here in Parliament.

I would also like to pay special tribute to my wife, Aida, and our two sons, Brandyn and Kevin, who love and support me each and every day. If not for their encouragement, I would not be in this House today.

Having had the opportunity to be an MP for a few months now, I can appreciate the demands of this position and commend all members on both sides of the House for their efforts, especially those who are forced to be away from young families.

Finally, I thank all the people of Sault Ste. Marie for bestowing their faith in me. I promise to respectfully and truthfully represent their views and concerns here in Ottawa. I pledge to work hard with the same diligence that the majority of my constituents demonstrate daily as they go about their lives.

They elected me because of the values and policies of the Conservative government. It is on their behalf that I would like to discuss the positive implications Canada's economic action plan has had on the riding of Sault Ste. Marie specifically and Canada as a whole, but more importantly the positive impacts the next phase of Canada's economic action plan, a low tax plan for jobs and growth, will bring.

I think the Federation of Canadian Municipalities put it best when they said, "[Budget 2011] delivered a vital commitment to cities and communities to develop a long-term federal infrastructure plan".

In my time on city council, I saw the effect that sound federal policy can have on infrastructure replacement with unprecedented road construction, thanks in part to the federal gas tax contribution. I am so pleased that our government, through the next phase of our economic action plan, will legislate a permanent annual investment of \$2 billion in the gas tax fund to provide predictable long-term infrastructure for municipalities.

Not only does this funding assist in replacing aging infrastructure but it also contributes to keeping municipal taxes low as the tax burden for infrastructure investment previously rested squarely on the shoulders of municipal taxpayers. Infrastructure projects are also a key provider of jobs.

I am especially grateful to this government for lowering the corporate tax rate and committing to keeping it low which is making our country more attractive to investors, once again creating new jobs.

### *Government Orders*

### *Government Orders*

It was not that long ago, two major employers in Sault Ste. Marie were in great difficulty and may very well have closed their doors, which would have been a devastating blow to our local economy.

Our low corporate tax policy attracted foreign investment to resurrect these companies, and as a result Essar Steel Algoma is now owned by a family from India, and TenarisAlgomaTubes is owned by a company from Argentina. These two companies provide 4,000 well-paying jobs in the Soo, and contribute indirectly to many more.

Canada must stay competitive in order to attract the kind of investment that will assist businesses that rely on global markets for their product and lower corporate tax rates ensure that competitive advantage.

I can say with certainty that an increase in the corporate tax, as required by the NDP to deliver on its promises, would have a profound negative effect on jobs and investment in Sault Ste. Marie. The steel industry is extremely volatile and every advantage counts.

Both companies I spoke of earlier would like to expand in the near future, creating the potential for new jobs, jobs that will not materialize with a corporate tax increase.

These policies have worked for all of Canada, not just Sault Ste. Marie. Canada is a leader in global economic recovery. Our government is focused on what matters to Canadians, creating jobs and promoting economic growth.

● (1020)

Canada has the strongest job growth record in the G7, with nearly 600,000 net new jobs created since July 2009. The IMF predicts that we will have among the strongest economic growth in the G7 over the next two years. This prediction is not accidental. It is based upon this government's policies on job creation and economic growth, including such things as providing a temporary hiring credit for small business to encourage hiring additional staff, as well as extending the accelerated capital cost allowance for investments in new equipment and machinery.

These investments enable our manufacturing firms to become more efficient and therefore more competitive, with the end result of more jobs. Not to mention the positive economic impact to those companies which actually provide the new machinery and equipment.

While job creation and the economy remain the top priority of this government, we are also committed to helping those giants of Canadian success, our seniors. As the member for Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry said:

When I hear stories of the hardships some of our seniors have endured I truly am in awe. Seniors deserve the respect and admiration of each and every Canadian for the contributions they have made and continue to make as mentors and leaders. They have raised families, built communities and created a standard of living in our country that is the envy of the world. It is virtually impossible to appropriately recognize or thank these brave generous men and women for their unselfish contribution.

Though it is impossible to adequately thank our senior citizens for the hard work and investment they have put into this great country, our nation has made them a priority, higher even than before. In the next phase of Canada's economic action plan we are introducing new

measures to improve the quality of life for these valuable contributors.

We are enhancing GIS for low-income seniors who will receive additional annual benefits of up to \$600 for single seniors and \$840 for couples. We are also eliminating the mandatory retirement age for federally regulated employees, so that those seniors who want to remain in the workforce have the freedom to do so.

Furthermore, while I campaigned, a common concern of seniors and many constituents was the lack of a family physician. I am proud of our government's position on forgiving loans for new doctors and nurses in underserved rural and remote areas.

I would now like to talk about this government's plan to balance the budget. As the Right Hon. David Cameron said during his visit, "the western world is facing a debt crisis". This government realizes we cannot put ourselves in a similar position. We are committed to a responsible, credible approach to balancing the budget by 2014-15 in a manner that will create greater efficiency and effectiveness within the operation of government and the various services it provides. We will do this without raising taxes, without slashing transfers to health, education and support to seniors.

The IMF recently declared that Canada has the best net debt to GDP ratio in the G7. However, the economy is still extremely fragile and we must be diligent in our efforts to balance the budget. As a new member of Parliament, there is still a lot I have to learn about how Parliament works and how it best serves Canadians. However, there are some things I am certain of, that cutting corporate taxes stimulates economic growth, that in order to survive in the globalized world we must embrace free trade, and that the Conservative Party of Canada is working hard to keep this country on the right course in the midst of economic turmoil around the world.

As we debate the implementation of the next phase of Canada's economic action plan, I would like to agree with the millions of Canadians who have praised this government for good fiscal management. We are on the right track and we will continue to fight for lower taxes, balanced budgets, and care for the most vulnerable.

Our country is the envy of the world, in no small part due to the hard work of the Prime Minister, my colleagues, and the Conservative Party of Canada.

● (1025)

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Mathieu Ravignat (Pontiac, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, first, I would like to congratulate my dear colleague on his first election at the federal level and on his first speech.

Last summer, the IMF concluded that when revenues are allocated more fairly, the periods of economic growth are longer and more stable. So why is there so little in this budget to address the inequality?



[English]

**Mr. Bryan Hayes:** Mr. Speaker, this morning Statistics Canada released a statement that in September, another 60,000 jobs were created in Canada, and our unemployment rate has dropped to 7.1%, which is the lowest level that it has been since 2008. Our stimulus package is obviously working. I do not think there is more that needs to be said and we need to continue along this path.

• (1030)

**Mr. Bob Zimmer (Prince George—Peace River, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I too congratulate the member for Sault Ste. Marie on his maiden speech. It was a good job. He referred to some major employers who plan to expand in the future. To expand on what he said, how would a corporate tax rate increase affect these plans?

**Mr. Bryan Hayes:** Mr. Speaker, in Sault Ste. Marie, one of our major employers is Essar Algoma Steel. It currently employs 3,200 people. It intends on expanding with a deep seaport expansion, and in the event that happens, it will be able to double capacity in Sault Ste. Marie. That translates to between 500 and 700 jobs. It is not only Essar Algoma Steel that will be able to take advantage of this particular harbour.

A key point as well is that in the event corporate taxes go up, the reality is that these corporations also support our small businesses. There is a trickle down effect. If our corporate taxes go up, resulting in lay-offs, there will be an impact on our small business community as well. That is simply something Canadians cannot afford and we definitely should not be considering it at all.

**Mr. Tarik Brahmī (Saint-Jean, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I listened carefully to the speech by the member for Sault Ste. Marie. The consequences of the budget that the government is proposing will have an impact on the level of debt for families. I would ask the member for Sault Ste. Marie, what will be the consequences on families in these ridings with regard to the level of debt?

**Mr. Bryan Hayes:** Mr. Speaker, I do not agree at all with what the hon. member is saying. The reality is that the tax measures that are in this plan will reduce the level of debt. Canadians will be paying on average \$3,000 a year less in tax. Personal taxes for Canadians are at the lowest level they have ever been, I believe, in 50 years. Once again, our low tax policies and job creation policies are working.

**Ms. Rathika Sitsabaiesan (Scarborough—Rouge River, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I congratulate my hon. colleague for his maiden speech in the House and on his election.

My colleague said cutting corporate taxes stimulates growth. I agree with what he is saying. The government is cutting taxes and giving away tax credits to large corporations, but what we have seen happen is that these corporations are sending jobs outside of our country.

How is this actually stimulating growth in our local communities, when the jobs are being shipped out of the country?

**Mr. Bryan Hayes:** Mr. Speaker, I do not agree that jobs are being shipped out of the country. I can only speak to what is happening in Sault Ste. Marie and quite frankly, jobs are coming into Sault Ste. Marie as a result of our low tax policies.

**Mr. Joe Preston (Elgin—Middlesex—London, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I know we have discussed many pieces of legislation here in the House but I cannot think of one that is more aptly named than

### *Government Orders*

“keeping Canada's economy and jobs growing act”, the second phase of our economic action plan.

The legislation includes key elements for the next phase of Canada's economic action plan, a low tax plan for jobs and growth. Our minister said:

Our Government is focused on what matters to Canadians—creating jobs and promoting economic growth

Canada has the strongest job record in the G7, having created more than 600,000 jobs and with a great new employment report out this morning. These jobs have been created since July of 2009. The International Monetary Fund projects that we will have among the strongest economic growth in the G7 over the next two years. However, we are not immune from global economic turbulence, which is why we need to stay the course and implement the next phase of Canada's economic action plan.

The minister is right, we do, and there are many ways that keeping Canada's economy and jobs growing act would help Canada's economy recover.

As a small business owner myself, I am very excited about the many ways this budget would help small businesses. I recently visited an innovation centre for entrepreneurs that has been created in St. Thomas, Ontario, with a little help from our government. It is an incubator for small businesses and entrepreneurs. Entrepreneurs who want to open their first business go there and work together. I was there speaking to some of the entrepreneurs not that long ago and they were talking about how much they thought this government's budgets have been on the absolute right course from an entrepreneurial point of view. We all know that, from a small business point of view, most of the jobs created are by entrepreneurs and small businesses. That same innovation centre won three awards last week as an innovation centre in Canada. I am very pleased with it.

Part of what this legislation would do is promote jobs and economic growth. One of the ways is by putting in place a temporary hiring credit for small businesses. As I stated, as a small businessman myself, we start off each day fairly optimistic, and in speaking to entrepreneurs, that is exactly the case. Most small business people are very optimistic about what their companies will do that year and about their growth. What this would put in place is a credit to hire and receive a credit for each person hired to expand the business this year. As a small business person, that is always a great incentive to move forward with the decision. When it may have been do or do not, this would push it over the edge.

I would also like to mention another small businessman, a friend of mine in St. Thomas, Jeff Yurek. Last night, he became a member of the provincial parliament. He is a pharmacist. In speaking to him late last night, we talked about working together to create jobs. I even mentioned that I would be speaking this morning to the budget. He is pretty excited about what he will be able to do and with the two of us working together. I congratulate Jeff Yurek.

### Government Orders

The budget also talks about expanding the tax support for clean energy generation to encourage green investments. We are simplifying customs tariffs in order to facilitate trade and to lower the administrative burden for business. I will speak to that just a bit.

The government has, over the last short period of time, under the review of one of our ministers, looked at red tape. In the election that we had earlier this spring, one of the more common things I heard from small business people, and specifically from farmers, is that they could do okay if governments would just get out of their way. Therefore, the removal of red tape and regulations, and certainly the duplication of regulations at the federal, provincial, and municipal level, is what most people are looking for. Any time a budget can move to remove administrative burdens for business, it is a good budget. It is letting the people who are earning the money put it in their pockets and not have to use the time and effort to create reports and send them on.

We are extending the accelerated capital cost allowance treatment for investments in manufacturing and processing equipment. As was already mentioned by my colleague earlier, this not only allows those businesses to increase their productivity, which we need to do in Canada, keep working on the productivity side by putting new equipment in place, it also allows the manufacturers of those pieces of equipment to generate income and the people who sell to them to generate income. It has a very good cascade effect.

● (1035)

As I have already said, as a small businessman in a small community that has had some job losses, this type of thing would have a cascade effect. Even where my business is, it can generate business because someone further up the chain is allowing this capital cost allowance.

I want to mention *Forbes* magazine, the pre-eminent business magazine in the world. It called Canada the best place to do business. Part of the reason was things like the capital cost allowance, the lowering of the red tape and the low tax structure that Canada has put in place.

As a sports fan, I never hear anybody in the stands saying that we are number four. Canada can proudly stand up this week and say that we are number one. We are the best place in the world to do business. Our job strategy is recognized around the world. For those contemplating opening a new plant and wondering where it should be, well the best business magazine in the world is saying that it should be done in Canada because it is the best place to do it. That is the type of thing that this strategy is getting for us.

Is that all there is? No. This legislation would also support communities. We would legislate a permanent annual investment of \$2 billion to the gas tax fund. This would be permanent and in place for our communities to be forward thinking in how they would do infrastructure.

We talk a lot about SCM, the big cities and big municipalities, and I respect them for what they do, but I represent places like Aylmer, Ontario, Malahide township and the municipality of Bayham. These are very small municipalities. When they need to do a piece of infrastructure spending to fix a bridge or a road, it is not a one-year project. The money has to be thought out over a bunch of years. The

fact that we would make the gas tax money permanent to them by legislation would enable them to plan ahead so that over the next four years they maybe could afford to fix a bridge using the gas tax money. The legislation would give predictability to small municipalities. However, I am sure the large municipalities would also be very pleased with that.

Also, we would enhance the wage earner protection program to cover more workers affected by employer bankruptcy and receivership.

As well, coming from a rural area in Canada, one of my favourites is the introduction of a volunteer firefighters tax credit for volunteer firefighters. Volunteers run our communities and are in every aspect of our communities. They are the hockey coaches and Boy Scout leaders. I spend a great deal of time on the United Way program in my riding and it is all run by volunteers. However, volunteer firefighters wake themselves up in the middle of the night when the bell goes off and go out and risk their lives. They spend their Saturdays training on how to be better firefighters. I am proud that the government will give them a tax credit toward part of what they do. Our thanks for what volunteers do in our communities needs to be part of it, and the volunteer firefighters tax credit would help.

The legislation would also help families by introducing a new family caregiver tax credit to assist caregivers. We would remove the limit on eligible expenses caregivers can claim under the medical expense tax credit.

We would introduce a new children's art tax credit. In past budgets, government has been able to help families with kids in sports. However, our world is well-rounded and we need the cultural side, too, and, therefore, a tax credit for kids involved in the arts is a great way to go.

I will conclude by saying that I spent 35 days earlier this spring, as other members did, knocking on doors, walking up farm lanes and maybe having too many Tim Hortons coffees. I was talking to people about this budget and what we would be putting forward. We came back with an overwhelming mandate, certainly in my riding, and across the country because people liked what we were talking about over those 35 days and wanted us to go back and do it and create some jobs.

● (1040)

**Mr. Francis Scarpaleggia (Lac-Saint-Louis, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I enjoyed listening to the hon. member's speech and my question to him is a simple one. Does he believe that the tax credits he mentioned, the firefighters tax credit and the children's arts tax credit, should be refundable tax credits so that lower income Canadians can benefit as well?

**Mr. Joe Preston:** Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for the opportunity to talk a little more about volunteers in rural ridings. I recognize that it is not exclusive to rural ridings but I know that the work that volunteer firefighters do in small communities stands out as a greater benefit than it may in some of the larger communities. No offence to the larger communities.



As I said, we spent 35 days on the campaign trail talking about what we were offering to rural Canadians and volunteers. One of the things was, as the member mentioned, the child tax credit. It was well accepted. Whether it was in coffee shops, schools or homes, people said that they liked the way we were headed and that we should carry on.

• (1045)

[Translation]

**Ms. Ève Péclet (La Pointe-de-l'Île, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to hear what my colleague has to say about corporate tax rates. He was talking about very low tax rates.

For example, the corporate tax rate for the federal government and the Ontario government combined was cut drastically, from 45% in 1999 to 30% in 2010. However, during the same period, investments in machinery and equipment dropped from 8.3% to 5.5%. This shows that lowering the corporate tax rate does not lead to more investments.

Could my colleague comment on that?

[English]

**Mr. Joe Preston:** Mr. Speaker, members are making it very easy for me this morning by mentioning all the good things this government is doing.

The member is right. Lowering corporate tax rates does work. Lowering the corporate tax allowance on machinery does work. Having a small business hiring tax credit does work. As a small business person and someone who has spent my life in business, I recognize that every dollar that is allowed to stay in my pocket or the pockets of entrepreneurs in this country somehow gets spent, either by them, their families or gets reinvested back into their businesses.

All of the measures that we have mentioned and the measures that the member opposite congratulated us on will do all of that.

**Mr. Richard Harris (Cariboo—Prince George, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I know that those in the NDP and Liberal Party who fight against a growing economy and creating jobs will not talk about this today because it is good news. This morning there was some remarkably good news on job creation, the economy and the unemployment rate. I would like the member to share that good news with us because it is worthy of repeating over and over again today.

**Mr. Joe Preston:** Mr. Speaker, I thank the member and good friend from British Columbia for helping set that up. I will see if I can hit this one out of the park.

Yes, the unemployment numbers are out this morning. Canada's unemployment rate is now a full two points less than the United States' unemployment rate. That has not happened in my generation. I do not remember it happening in my lifetime as a business person. There were 60,000 new jobs created in the last month right here in Canada.

I understand that the job of opposition parties is to try to find what they can, but I would ask them to please stop talking my country down. I live in the best country on the face of this earth. I live in a country that is working better than most around the world in creating jobs, dreams and opportunities. I am very thankful that we continue

to move down that road. Pieces of legislation like this will help grease the rails to make it happen. We need to keep doing it and we need the opposition to help.

[Translation]

**Ms. Ève Péclet (La Pointe-de-l'Île, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, before beginning my speech, I would like to set the record straight about some things that the hon. member claims I said, which I did not. I said that, when the taxes of large corporations dropped from 45% to 30%, investments decreased. They therefore did not increase. This shows that the decrease in large corporations' taxes did not increase investments. Now, I would like to start my speech.

My priority is to stand up for the interests of families, youth, workers and seniors. That is the mandate that the people of La Pointe-de-l'Île gave me. These are the issues that made up the NDP's campaign platform. Meanwhile, the government continues to give tax credits to large corporations. We are talking about \$2 billion this year alone, not to mention the mess involving the use of public money during the G8 or the use of helicopters and planes for personal reasons.

Meanwhile, look at the cold reality Canadians are facing. Let us think of the large and growing gap between the rich and the poor in Canada. From 1998 to 2007, one-third of the country's income growth was among 1% of the wealthiest Canadians, those with incomes of \$400,000 a year or more.

The IMF published a study that found that the more equitable the distribution of income, the longer and more stable the periods of economic growth. However, this budget does not do anything to solve the problems that thousands of Canadians are experiencing every day. The government clearly has no idea what Canadians actually need. A big part of the population in my riding is aging. We must work to prevent seniors from falling into poverty. We must offer them affordable housing. We must provide them with financial support so that they have a decent standard of living. The bill does not include any plan for creating affordable housing. We want concrete measures, not just half measures, to fight poverty and allow the Canadian economy to truly recover from the recession. Eleven million Canadians do not have retirement pensions through their employers and, meanwhile, approximately 250,000 seniors are living in poverty.

The budget says that seniors living alone who have a maximum income of \$2,000 will receive an additional \$600 a year. It does not make any sense to claim that a mere \$600 extra a year will help a senior escape from poverty. That is approximately \$2 a day. Can someone really escape poverty, feed themselves, pay for their prescriptions and pay their rent with approximately \$2 extra a day? They cannot.

What is more, this credit will decrease as their income increases. When a senior living alone gets an annual income supplement of \$4,400, they can no longer benefit from the tax credit the government is proposing in this budget. That is despicable. Seniors need our help. They also need to have peace of mind and know that they will have enough to eat and can get the medicine they need.

### *Government Orders*

I would like to talk about tax credits because, for days now, the government has been saying that it has created tax credits that will help people. But what good is it to give a tax credit to someone who is not working or to someone who pays little or no income tax? These people cannot benefit from tax credits. These tax credits will have no impact on the people who really need them, the people who need help from this government. For example, the tax credit for caregivers is insufficient and will discriminate against countless low-income families.

I would like to give the government a crash course in tax credits. The problem with tax credits is that they are only given to the people who have enough income to actually claim the credits. Since 65% of households with a caregiver declare a combined income of less than \$45,000 and 23% declare less than \$20,000, the majority of caregivers will not be able to benefit from this tax credit. Why not create a tax benefit that all caregivers can qualify for? Now there is a concrete solution for this government.

I wish the government would stop saying that the NDP is refusing to negotiate. It is the government that is refusing to listen to the offers we are making. The Conservatives are using their majority to pass bills that have no impact on Canadian society, the unemployed, families or seniors.

• (1050)

We could also talk about families. Tax credits to promote the participation of children in physical, artistic and cultural activities are a good idea, I agree. However, this initiative does not take into account the 30% of people living on the island of Montreal who did not pay taxes or the people in my riding who cannot afford to send their children to these kinds of activities. I think it is great to help families that can afford to send their children to such activities; I have no problem with that. But I also think we need to help the families that cannot afford to pay their rent, let alone enrol their children in such activities. Parents should not be forced to choose between feeding their children or paying the rent and enrolling them in physical, artistic and cultural activities.

Once again, a tax benefit would allow most families living in poverty to send their kids to such activities, yet another concrete measure the government should examine and consider. This government's budget does not invest in social housing and does not take into account the reality of thousands of Quebecers and Canadians. The government must understand that it is crucial to develop a plan to give families, seniors and everyone access to affordable housing so that they do not have to worry about choosing between paying their rent and feeding their families. This government is forcing families living in poverty to make that decision, and this is unacceptable in a society like ours here in Canada.

Why does this government keep cutting taxes for corporations, oil companies and the banks? This takes away billions of dollars that could otherwise be invested for Canadians. Then the government announces \$4 billion in cuts that will have a direct impact on public services for Canadians. The government is making cuts at Environment Canada and Service Canada and we are already seeing their disastrous impact on Canadians. A number of people in my riding have been waiting for their employment insurance cheque for

months. One constituent in particular came to see me at my office. After waiting for three months for her employment insurance benefits, she went into foreclosure because she could not pay her mortgage. She lost her home, she is homeless, she has no money left for food and she is worried about her children. I am sure she is not alone. This is unacceptable and it makes no sense.

This \$4 billion in cuts is money that could easily have come out of the oil companies' \$100 billion annual profits or the \$10 billion on average in tax credits and gifts given to corporations every year. Glen Hodgson, from the Conference Board of Canada, told the Standing Committee on Finance a number of times this week that tax expenditures, including ineffective tax cuts given to corporations, should be included in the scrutiny of government spending. The Department of Finance itself recognizes that infrastructure investment has five times the economic impact of corporate tax cuts. This fact is published in the appendix to budget 2009.

The thing that is even more shocking about the government's position is that in addition to announcing billions of dollars in cuts, it is now asking Canadian taxpayers to foot the bill for its radical policies on crime and defence. Is asking Canadians to pay millions of dollars for prisons, jets and whatever else they can come up with part of an economic recovery plan? It is totally illogical. While the government muzzles us and uses its majority to pass legislation that is totally absurd and out of touch with reality, 1.4 million Canadians are still waiting for a real job creation action plan—2 million if we count those who have given up or are underemployed.

Furthermore, the government claims to have created 600,000 net new jobs. That is another sad distortion of the truth. Since the peak of job creation before the start of the recession in May 2008, barely 200,000 new jobs have been created. However, the labour force has increased by 450,000 since then. Thus, 250,000 more jobs are needed just to maintain employment at pre-recession levels. Between July 2008 and July 2011, only 260,000 jobs were created. Even based on July 2007 figures, only 495,900 jobs were created between 2007 and 2011, not 600,000 as the government claims.

• (1055)

The government is abandoning millions of unemployed workers and is not really investing in job creation. The budget does not include any plans for job creation. For example, energy processing consists primarily of petroleum refining. This sector of our economy is in decline in Quebec and Canada. What is the government's response? Use Canadian capabilities? No. Create jobs for Canadians. Of course not. It has chosen trade over jobs for Canadians. This government prefers to build pipelines such as the Keystone pipeline to export crude oil to the United States for refining. With what result? Members will be surprised—the loss of thousands of jobs. In my—

**The Speaker:** I am sorry, but I must interrupt the hon. member.

She will have five minutes for questions and comments after question period.



## STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

• (1100)

[Translation]

### “MP FOR A DAY” COMPETITION

**Mr. André Bellavance (Richmond—Arthabaska, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to announce that Benjamin Laliberté, from the Victoriaville CEGEP, is the winner of the fifth “MP for a Day” competition.

This non-partisan competition aims to help young people learn about the realities of public life and to teach them about the work of politicians—and politics in general—while encouraging them to maintain a critical eye. This competition is a concrete way for me to show them how our democracy works.

Benjamin, a player for the Victoriaville Tigres in the Quebec Major Junior Hockey League, was declared the winner by a panel. The contestants were asked to evaluate free trade agreements that Canada has signed or is in the progress of signing, and to explain whether they benefit Quebec.

I would like to thank Jean-François Léonard, the political science and geography teacher at the Victoriaville CEGEP, with whom I organized the competition. I would also like to thank the Société Saint-Jean-Baptiste, the Sévigny-Baril duo from La Capitale as well as the UPA Centre-du-Quebec for their contributions to the scholarships awarded to the top three contestants.

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[English]

### POLICE AND PEACE OFFICERS' NATIONAL MEMORIAL DAY

**Ms. Lois Brown (Newmarket—Aurora, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, on September 24, 1998, the Government of Canada officially proclaimed the last Sunday of September of every year as Police and Peace Officers' National Memorial Day.

This national memorial day gives Canadians an opportunity each year to formally express appreciation for the dedication of police and peace officers who made the ultimate tragic sacrifice to keep our communities safe.

For the last 12 years, I have had the honour and privilege of attending the memorial as accompanist of the North York Regional Police Male Chorus. This September 25, it was a spectacular sight to see the thousands of men and women in uniform on Parliament Hill gathered to honour those who had fallen and to support the families left behind.

Today I invite all my colleagues to join me in saluting police and peace officers in service across our country and in honouring those who died while protecting their communities. For they are our heroes, we shall not forget them.

\* \* \*

### MULTICULTURALISM

**Mr. Jasbir Sandhu (Surrey North, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister recently said that “Islamicism” is the biggest security

### Statements by Members

threat to our country. This is shocking and insulting. The Prime Minister's comments are misleading and deeply offensive to the many peaceful Muslims in my community and across the country.

It sets a very dangerous precedent when we have a Prime Minister willing to use divisive language like this to drive wedges between people and communities for political purposes.

Muslims, and no doubt tolerant Canadians of all faiths, do not want to see our communities pitted against each other by anyone, let alone our own Prime Minister, and have asked that he apologize for these insensitive remarks.

Tolerance and respect for diversity are the foundation of a peaceful society. We can make our country secure without resorting to divisive politics and without creating a climate of fear.

On behalf of the Muslim community in my constituency and all those across Canada, I ask the Prime Minister to apologize for these regrettable statements.

\* \* \*

### IMPORTATION OF INTOXICATING LIQUORS ACT

**Mr. Dan Albas (Okanagan—Coquihalla, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, earlier this week I introduced my private member's bill calling for an end to wine prohibition in Canada. Bill C-311, if passed by my colleagues, will allow Canadian wineries to sell to Canadians all across this great country. Something that the 83-year old prohibition era Importation of Intoxicating Liquors Act currently makes illegal.

After introducing my bill the phone started to ring: CBC Halifax, *Niagara This Week*, the St. Catharine's *Standard* and others.

It turns out Nova Scotia is an emerging wine region with roughly 15 wineries. It can produce great wines in places like the Annapolis Valley and elsewhere.

Twenty years ago in British Columbia we had roughly 15 wineries. Today in B.C. we have close to 200. Think about the potential for Nova Scotia.

Ontario Niagara region has close to 16,000 acres planted in grapes. In the province of Quebec there are now close to 50 wineries.

In fact, there are now wineries in every province across Canada.

Ending wine prohibition will help family-owned wineries all across Canada. I hope my colleagues will support Bill C-311.

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### THE ENVIRONMENT

**Ms. Kirsty Duncan (Etobicoke North, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, together all the world's peoples face common vulnerabilities from climate change to depleted ozone that transcend borders. No country, community, no corporation can exist apart from its environment.

### *Statements by Members*

Fortunately a significant number of companies are recognizing our common future. One such company is Molson Coors, which believes good business practices embrace environmental stewardship. The company is proud of its positive trend in its environmental impact, its great Canadian shoreline cleanups and its Molson Canadian Red Leaf Project, an ongoing commitment to give back to the land that sustains us by planting 100,000 trees from coast to coast to coast.

Molson Coors understands that when we compromise the air, the water, the soil and the variety of life, we steal from the endless future to serve the fleeting present. What will our organization do to preserve our planet?

\* \* \*

● (1105)

### THE ENVIRONMENT

**Ms. Michelle Rempel (Calgary Centre-North, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure to speak to our government's work on the chemicals management plan, an important and valuable program that focuses on assessing the risks of approximately 4,300 chemicals, including products currently found in Canadian households. Through this plan, chemicals have been identified as potential risks to human health and to the environment.

To date, the Government of Canada has addressed approximately 1,100 high priority chemicals found in consumer products and industrial applications in Canada, through three of the chemicals management plan's main initiatives: the challenge to industry; the rapid screening of substances of lower concern; and the petroleum sector stream approach.

These important initiatives have enabled our government to take important steps to continue to protect Canadians from harmful chemicals in products and to protect our environment against potential risks.

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### SHAWVILLE FAIR

**Mr. Mathieu Ravignat (Pontiac, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, on Labour Day weekend past, the Pontiac Agricultural Society celebrated the 155th anniversary of the Shawville Fair. This event has been bringing the community together longer than Confederation.

I believe that agricultural fairs like the one in Shawville are a time to celebrate and recognize an industry that is so important to our lives and also to thank farmers themselves for all their hard work keeping quality nutritious food on our tables.

Since William Clark and his directors held the first Shawville agricultural fair, many changes have occurred over the years. However, the essential goal remains the same: creating a showplace for local products and allowing farmers to interact with their urban cousins.

Of course, the fair could not exist without hundreds of volunteers. I want to congratulate and thank them for making this such a great success.

[Translation]

This being harvest season, I would also like to take this opportunity to salute all the farmers in my riding, from the pastures in L'Ange-Gardien and the fields of Gracefield, to the meadows of Fort-Coulonge: my sincere congratulations.

All hon. members are cordially invited to attend the 156th anniversary edition of the Shawville fair next year.

\* \* \*

[English]

### RELIGIOUS FREEDOM

**Mr. David Sweet (Ancaster—Dundas—Flamborough—Westdale, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the ruling Iranian regime continues its unrelenting attack on human rights against its own citizens.

While seven leaders of the Baha'i community remain in prison in Iran on trumped up charges dating back over three years, we have reported another case before us where an Iranian citizen is jailed because of his religious beliefs. The most recent victim is Pastor Youcef Nadarkhani, whose only crime is staying true to his Christian faith and refusing to recant. For that, he has been sentenced to death.

Iran not only breaches its international obligations regarding religious freedom, but in actions like this, that are too common in Iran under this present regime, it is guilty of crimes under its own constitution.

In the recent Speech from the Throne, our government renewed our pledge to create an office of religious freedom to monitor and combat exactly this kind of human rights violations and religious intolerance around the globe.

I ask all members of the House of Commons and all Canadians to raise their voices in unison to pressure the Iranian authorities to abide by their own constitution, fulfill their international obligations and release Pastor Youcef Nadarkhani and the seven Baha'i leaders now.

\* \* \*

### SMALL BUSINESS

**Mr. Joe Daniel (Don Valley East, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I am delighted to stand before the House today to report that the government's economic plan is working, and in particular, for small businesses.

I am pleased to announce that on October 19 of this month a new business will be opening in my riding. Despite the global economic turmoil, Canada is still the best place for small businesses. On October 19, owner Bani Azan will be opening a Cora franchise on York Mills Road in Don Valley East. This will create a number of new jobs in my riding.

The actions that the government is taking to help small businesses will give this business a good start in establishing itself and securing its long-term future.

I congratulate Bani Azan and Cora on opening this business and wish them the very best for the future.

This government's small-business initiatives will create new businesses, new jobs and growth in existing businesses.



[Translation]

### QUEBEC CITY HIV-AIDS ORGANIZATION

**Ms. Annick Papillon (Québec, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, 26 years ago today, on October 7, the first clinic in Canada dedicated exclusively to AIDS testing opened in Vancouver. One year later in Quebec City, in a climate of uncertainty, MIELS-Québec, an information and support movement in the fight against HIV-AIDS, was founded. Some 25 years later, thanks to its experienced team of employees, its many volunteers and support from valued partners, this movement remains as active as ever in the Quebec City region.

MIELS-Québec has become an undisputed leader thanks to the prevention services it offers, as well as the information it provides on testing, psychological and social support, housing and recovery.

I wish to sincerely commend the exceptional work of its executive director, Thérèse Richer, and her entire team. Congratulations to MIELS-Québec on 25 years of dedication to our community. I also wish to highlight the support provided by other organizations in Quebec City working on the same cause. While much progress has been made, the fight must go on.

\* \* \*

● (1110)

[English]

### THE ECONOMY

**Ms. Candice Hoepfner (Portage—Lisgar, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, our government's top priority remains completing the economic recovery. Canadians gave our Conservative government a strong mandate to stay focused on what matters: creating jobs and economic growth. We are the only G7 country that has regained more than all of the jobs that were lost during the downturn.

We have recently been ranked as the best country for business and as the country with the best economic reputation. These are key opportunities for Canada to show leadership and promote strong and sustainable growth in the short and long-term and work on ways to strengthen market confidence and promote global recovery.

That is why our Conservative government is staying the course, with our low tax plan to create jobs and growth. That is why the last thing the Canadian economy needs is a massive NDP tax hike that would kill jobs, stall our recovery and set Canadian families back.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

### SPORTS IN LA POINTE-DE-L'ÎLE

**Ms. Ève Péclet (La Pointe-de-l'Île, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, on a different note, I am pleased to rise in the House today to celebrate the success of the Rangers, a hockey team from Montreal East. The team is currently ranked first in its AAA league. I would like to thank the municipality of Montreal East and those in charge of the team, but I would primarily like to congratulate the players for managing to balance sports and schooling. I tip my hat to them and encourage them to exercise their passion for our national sport while excelling in their studies. Go Rangers!

Last Saturday I attended the awards ceremony for those who volunteer with the Pointe-aux-Trembles soccer association. I would

### Statements by Members

like to congratulate all the coaches, assistants, volunteers and the board of directors for their time and devotion, which has allowed these young people to flourish in a sport that encourages team spirit and respect. I would like to thank you for your commitment to helping our community's youth.

\* \* \*

[English]

### SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

**Mrs. Susan Truppe (London North Centre, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, our government has invested more in science and technology than any government in Canadian history, creating jobs, growing our economy and improving the quality of life for all Canadians. In fact, Canada leads the G7 in terms of investment in higher education, research and development.

Now for the first time the International Council for Science has elected a Canadian as its president. Dr. Gordon McBean of the University of Western Ontario was recently elected president of the council, which boasts a global membership that represents 141 countries. The council has a long-term vision for a world where science is used for the benefit of all.

A distinguished Canadian scientist, Dr. McBean has been the recipient of the Order of Canada and the Order of Ontario and is a Fellow of the Royal Society of Canada. This is truly an impressive accomplishment. On behalf of our government I want to congratulate Dr. McBean on his new role.

I know I speak for all Canadians when I say that I am proud of the leadership Canadian scientists are showing the world.

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### ONTARIO ELECTION

**Mr. Ted Hsu (Kingston and the Islands, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the trifecta was rejecta.

[Translation]

Congratulations to the Premier of Ontario, Dalton McGuinty, and his Liberal team, who won the well-deserved right to form the third consecutive Liberal government.

[English]

Dalton McGuinty's Liberals earned the respect of Ontarians by making the decisions that were needed even when those decisions were not popular. The people of Ontario have turned to the Liberal government they trust in these perilous economic times to invest their resources wisely, to plan for Ontario's future in health care, education, energy and the jobs of the 21st century.

The Liberal movement is alive and well in Ontario.

I wish to especially congratulate John Gerretsen, one of the finest public servants in Ontario, and MPP for my home riding, Kingston and the Islands.

[Translation]

Thank you to everyone, from all parties, who worked on this election. You are what makes democracy work.

*Oral Questions**[English]***YOM KIPPUR**

**Mr. Pierre Poilievre (Nepean—Carleton, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, tonight Jewish families across our beautiful country begin their Yom Kippur observances. They mark the holy day and celebrate the ancient and strong Jewish faith. Judaism is a religion that binds families and communities. It is a religion that demonstrates the value of thoughtfulness, forgiveness and atonement. This Jewish holy day is an occasion for us to wish members of the community a prayerful Yom Kippur.

Today, across our dominion, Jewish Canadians will gather with friends and families to reflect and seek reconciliation with God. They will pray for peace and they will repent.

The Talmud states the Books of Life and Death are open until Yom Kippur and on Yom Kippur a final decision is made about our faith in the new year. For my constituents and all Canadians of the Jewish faith, we all wish them a happy and rewarding Yom Kippur.

\* \* \*

● (1115)

**NOBEL PEACE PRIZE**

**Ms. Hélène Laverdière (Laurier-Sainte-Marie, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I am delighted to rise today to honour the three women recipients of the 2011 Nobel Peace Prize: Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, Leymah Gbowee, and Tawakkul Karman.

They were awarded the prize “for their non-violent struggle for the safety of women and for women's rights to full participation in peace-building work.”

The important strides in peace-building these women have made remind us that Canada must live up to its international obligations under UN Security Council resolution 1325 to involve women at decision-making levels in conflict resolution and peace processes around the world.

The award is a victory for the many women working worldwide for peace, democracy and social justice. On behalf of the official opposition, I wish to extend our warmest congratulations to these three exemplary women.

\* \* \*

**POLITICAL DONATIONS**

**Ms. Kerry-Lynne D. Findlay (Delta—Richmond East, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, questionable NDP fundraising tactics have been referred to Canada's elections commissioner for investigation.

It was revealed two weeks ago that the NDP has received at least \$85,000 from their big union bosses for their latest convention. Is the NDP forgetting or just ignoring the fact that these sorts of donations were banned in 2005?

We have urged the NDP to come clean and provide full disclosure of all contributions, but they have been silent on the issue. Why will the NDP not come forward and be transparent? Will they be using these same improper tactics for their upcoming leadership convention?

**ORAL QUESTIONS***[Translation]***JUSTICE**

**Mr. Thomas Mulcair (Outremont, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, the government is violating the rights of Parliament by forcing the passage of its omnibus crime bill without debate. In fact, a number of aspects of this bill are very debatable. According to the Parliamentary Budget Officer, the government's estimates of the costs have no rhyme or reason. They are not based on any specific methodology or verifiable information, and they do not take provincial costs into account.

When will this government finally be honest with the provinces? When will it finally be honest with Canadians about the real cost of its so-called law and order agenda?

*[English]*

**Ms. Kerry-Lynne D. Findlay (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Justice, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the fact is that the cost of crime on Canadian society far exceeds the cost of fighting crime. The fact is that last spring we provided the committee with hundreds of pages of documents that go into precise detail on costing.

For the hon. member's benefit, the Minister of Justice recently tabled a summary of these documents at the justice committee. They show very clearly that the federal cost of Bill C-10 is \$78.6 million over five years.

We are working with our provincial and territorial partners on these costs. We believe that working in collaboration with them is important to ensure a strong justice system.

**Mr. Thomas Mulcair (Outremont, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, it cost some \$73 million for a website. Are we to believe that is the real cost?

*[Translation]*

Members know that this government loves to hand out cheques written on other people's money. With respect to the provincial costs of the bill, the Parliamentary Budget Officer—a man of authority who is neutral, independent and credible, and who is never wrong, whereas the government always tries to ram false information down our throats—is accusing the government of obstruction. Quebec does not seem too worried because it said this morning that it will be asking the federal government to reimburse every dollar.

What will this government do?

● (1120)

*[English]*

**Ms. Kerry-Lynne D. Findlay (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Justice, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I reiterate that the Department of Justice study in 2008 tagged the cost of crime on society at almost \$100 billion in that year alone. That it was borne by victims by 83% is what we are concerned about mostly.



*Oral Questions*

Since our government took office, support payments to the provinces have increased by 30%, or \$12.7 billion. In budget 2010-11, we announced transfer payments to the provinces and territories of \$54 billion, an increase of \$2.4 billion over last year.

**Mr. Thomas Mulcair (Outremont, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, the Conservatives have always boasted they would not download to the provinces. That is exactly what this is. No one believes them, especially not the highly credible Parliamentary Budget Officer, who is always right whenever they are trying to give false information.

Now they want Canadians to believe that their massive prison agenda will cost no more than their website. Nobody believes them. Canadians do not buy it, the PBO certainly does not and the government knows it is hiding the true cost to the provinces of the downloading of the prison expenses.

Provinces want more front-line police, not a bill for more prisons that the Conservatives dictated. When will the government come clean with the provinces on the true cost of its prison agenda?

**Ms. Kerry-Lynne D. Findlay (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Justice, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, it would be refreshing if just for once the opposition members would really look at the cost of crime on the victims and on law-abiding Canadians.

We are following through on our commitment to help victims of crime, particularly those most vulnerable, the children in our society, and to protect them from those who would traffic in illegal drugs.

We would love it if the opposition would get on board with these initiatives to help those who are the most vulnerable in society.

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**COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE**

**Mr. Guy Caron (Rimouski-Neigette—Témiscouata—Les Basques, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, last week opposition MPs tried to get the public accounts committee to study past Auditor General reports.

Conservatives forced the meeting behind closed doors, an assault on transparency and accountability. Now it turns out this committee did not adopt a motion to deal with these important issues on government waste and mismanagement.

The Conservative member for Sault Ste. Marie was even quoted by the media as saying, "At this stage of the game, I want to start with a fresh slate".

Do Conservatives object to the Auditor General's past reports being studied?

**Hon. Peter Van Loan (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, as we all know, committees are masters of their own destiny, but I would say this: right now our government is engaged in an effort to try to reduce government spending and reduce the size of government, and every step of the way it is the opposition members who are objecting to that.

We appreciate the efforts of the Auditor General to assist us in providing reports that help us to find examples of government waste.

We know we want to eliminate them. We know we want to reduce government spending. We know that every time we try to do it, those

guys get upset. They are objecting to our efforts to cut down on spending.

[Translation]

**Mr. Guy Caron (Rimouski-Neigette—Témiscouata—Les Basques, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, the Conservatives continue to hide the truth from Canadians. An opposition motion to study the Auditor General's previous reports was not adopted by the Standing Committee on Public Accounts: reports on cost overruns for military helicopters, the \$500,000 severance paid to the integrity commissioner, and mismanaged renovations on Parliament Hill.

The Conservative member for Sault Ste. Marie even told the media, "With the election, much has changed."

Why will this government not let the Standing Committee on Public Accounts do its work? What does it have to hide?

[English]

**Hon. Peter Van Loan (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, once again, the committees determine their own agendas. They determine their work program and they are, of course, doing that with an objective of reducing government spending. We appreciate the work of the Auditor General, because the Auditor General has been very helpful to us in providing recommendations on which we have relied in order to eliminate waste in government. That is what we want to do on this side of the House.

It is very interesting that New Democrats are raising these concerns, because usually they object to every effort we make to eliminate waste and to keep the cost and size of government under control.

We will continue to do that and we appreciate the help of the Auditor General in providing us information that helps us achieve that objective of respecting taxpayers' dollars above all else.

\* \* \*

**THE BUDGET**

**Mr. Marc Garneau (Westmount—Ville-Marie, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister has more than once said that he is open to suggestions on the budget. Here is one suggestion. While the budget contains a number of tax credits for volunteer firemen, home caregivers and children taking arts courses, the problem is that these are not refundable. The solution to this is to make them refundable.

Will the Prime Minister consider this option, please?

• (1125)

**Mrs. Shelly Glover (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my colleague for that question, because it gives me the opportunity to report just how our budgets, from past budgets to the budgets that are coming forward, are actually helping Canadians in a variety of ways, including the measures that were mentioned by my colleague.

In fact, thanks to our budget, I can report today that we have learned that over 60,000 jobs have been created, which brings the total number of jobs to approximately 650,000 since pre-crisis levels.

### Oral Questions

That is a fantastic budget from the past to the future. We will continue our progress.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

### NATIONAL DEFENCE

**Mr. Marc Garneau (Westmount—Ville-Marie, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I have a second question for the government. Japan recently decided to purchase fighter jets and has launched a call for tenders, as we should have done.

With a call for tenders, the best benefits are guaranteed and one can save a lot of money. Lockheed Martin has offered to assemble the F-35 jets in Japan, something it certainly did not offer to Canada. With a call for tenders, we would be guaranteed the best industrial benefits and we would save a lot of money. When will we have a call for tenders here in Canada?

**Mr. Chris Alexander (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of National Defence, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, all reasonable Canadians agree that we need fighter jets to protect our sovereignty. We will continue to ensure that our Canadian armed forces have the best equipment.

But we have a question. This F-35 program started under the Liberal government. Why are they now opposed to it? Why are they opposed to industrial benefits for cities like Montreal, for example?

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[English]

### FISHERIES AND OCEANS

**Mr. Scott Andrews (Avalon, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, in Newfoundland and Labrador, rules surrounding access to the recreational food fishery continue to be unfair compared to other areas of Atlantic Canada. During the small window of opportunity this year the weather was deplorable, and during last week residents were not able to participate. Earlier this week I asked the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans to extend the food fishery for this long weekend. Unfortunately, the minister has not responded to my request.

I ask the minister responsible for Newfoundland and Labrador: will he be fair and extend the recreational food fishery in Newfoundland and Labrador for this Thanksgiving long weekend?

**Mr. Randy Kamp (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans and for the Asia-Pacific Gateway, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I know the minister has taken account of this request, but I would remind the member that the most important thing is the conservation and sustainability of the fishery. I think my colleague will know that the fishery has been under significant stress over the last number of years, and we need to do make the best decisions for the future of the fishery for Newfoundlanders and Labradorians.

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[Translation]

### CHAMPLAIN BRIDGE

**Mr. Hoang Mai (Brossard—La Prairie, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, two days after the announcement of the construction of a new Champlain Bridge, south shore and Montreal families are still in the dark. They do not know exactly when they will have a safe bridge or

how much it will cost. All they know is that they are going to have to bear the financial burden of the bridge.

Why does this government want to penalize families and workers who have no choice but to use the Champlain Bridge?

**Mr. Pierre Poilievre (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Transport, Infrastructure and Communities and for the Federal Economic Development Agency for Southern Ontario, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, this week, the Minister of Transport, Infrastructure and Communities announced the construction of a new bridge across the St. Lawrence in Montreal. I would like to commend the minister for his excellent work. This project will involve a public-private partnership and the use of tolls. That is the way to move forward with the construction of this new infrastructure. This is good news and I would like to invite the NDP members to finally support this action to improve transportation in Montreal.

**Mr. Hoang Mai (Brossard—La Prairie, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, the Champlain Bridge is a vital route for south shore and Montreal families. The bridge is free to cross but the Conservatives want to make people pay to use it.

When will this government pay attention to all Canadians instead of just to those who have the means to be heard?

• (1130)

**Mr. Pierre Poilievre (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Transport, Infrastructure and Communities and for the Federal Economic Development Agency for Southern Ontario, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, first, I would like to thank the hon. member because it was his idea to have a toll system. He said, "In terms of tolls, it's still to be seen. Like we've always said, we're open." He also said, "With regard to the Champlain Bridge's replacement, we're not dismissing the idea of tolls." He had a good idea: to implement a toll. We listened to him and used his idea. I congratulate him, but now I would like to know why he has changed his mind.

[English]

**Mr. Jamie Nicholls (Vaudreuil—Soulanges, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, the government still refuses to say whether a viable public transit plan will be part of the new Champlain Bridge. First it is making Montreal and the south shore families foot the bill, and now it is ignoring 18,000 public transit passengers who cross that bridge each day.

The government members are so out of touch with the needs of Montreal and the south shore, we have to wonder whether they have ever been there. Why will the government not commit to a vital public transit plan for the Champlain Bridge?



[Translation]

**Mr. Pierre Poilievre (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Transport, Infrastructure and Communities and for the Federal Economic Development Agency for Southern Ontario, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, here is another NDP member with an excellent idea. The NDP transport critic, the hon. member who just spoke on the matter, has said, and I quote, "...as a party, we are not against PPPs". He also said that in some cases tolls make sense. I congratulate him again on these great ideas. We listened to him and we thank him for giving his opinion on the matter.

**Mr. Jamie Nicholls (Vaudreuil—Soulanges, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, that is not exactly the answer I was looking for. I was talking about public transit.

Why has the government not made any plans for public transit on the new Champlain Bridge? Every day, 400 buses carry 18,000 passengers across the bridge. There is a great demand. The minister keeps saying that it is a provincial responsibility, while repeating that the project is 100% federal. When will this government adopt a plan for public transit?

**Mr. Pierre Poilievre (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Transport, Infrastructure and Communities and for the Federal Economic Development Agency for Southern Ontario, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, prior to the announcement made by our great minister, the NDP had suggested a toll system to pay for the Champlain Bridge. That is why many people are now saying that the new name for the NDP should be "new duty to pay". So I would like to thank the NDP member for suggesting this excellent idea. In the end, it is the Conservatives who are taking action and getting results for Montrealers and Canadians.

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## THE ENVIRONMENT

**Ms. Megan Leslie (Halifax, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, it has been a tough week for the Minister of the Environment. The environment commissioner slammed his work and Europe is proposing a fuel quality directive. The message is clear: the oil sands pollute too much to compete with clean energy. The public relations campaigns are not hiding the devastating impact of the oil sands.

When will the government recognize this?

[English]

**Mr. David Anderson (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Natural Resources and for the Canadian Wheat Board, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, we do not agree with the energy directive that has come out from the EU.

We are going to continue to work to represent and to protect Canadian oil sands interests and Canadian economic interests. We will stand with the workers. We will stand with the industry. We are going to protect the environment at the same time.

**Ms. Megan Leslie (Halifax, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, yesterday the Minister of the Environment went to great lengths to clear up the confusion around the muzzling of Environment Canada scientists. It seems that the department scientists are completely free, subject to availability of course, to speak with responsible journalists.

## Oral Questions

Would the minister please table in this House a list of these so-called responsible journalists so we can know to whom the government is actually talking about its failed environmental plans?

**Ms. Michelle Rempel (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of the Environment, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, our government is squarely focused on what matters to Canadians: jobs, economic growth and protecting the environment.

We are proud of the work of our scientists within Environment Canada. Ministers speak for the environment. That is what is laid out in our communication policy, and that is why we take questions in question period.

\* \* \*

• (1135)

## ABORIGINAL AFFAIRS

**Ms. Linda Duncan (Edmonton—Strathcona, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, in September, a 23-year-old woman was fatally shot on the Samson Cree Nation. She was killed in the house next door to where five-year-old Ethan Yellowbird was killed just two months earlier.

Youth gangs are responsible for the increasing violence in a community where youth are disaffected and hopeless.

If the government is truly sincere about assisting the most vulnerable, why does it persist in spending billions on prisons instead of investing in programs to prevent youth crime in first nations?

**Hon. John Duncan (Minister of Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the member talked about the situation with the Samson Cree. I did meet with the chief. He has been collaborating with the RCMP. The community has some very good plans. We have agreed to collaborate with that first nation and help finance some of the work that needs to be done. This is to break up the criminal element from being able to operate in the way that it was.

We are making progress and working collaboratively with that first nation.

**Ms. Linda Duncan (Edmonton—Strathcona, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, as the minister has attested, the Samson Cree Nation initiated a joint review with the RCMP, the government and experts to address crime, which is among the highest in Canadian aboriginal communities.

The key recommendation supported by all parties was to provide a youth centre to provide programs to divert youth from gangs. The first nation is begging the government to fully cost share with it. It is struggling to find other funders.

Instead of spending billions more on jailing criminals after the fact, why will the government not offer more than one-fifth of the cost to build this centre and prevent more aboriginal victims of crime?

*Oral Questions*

**Hon. John Duncan (Minister of Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, we do believe in working in partnership with the first nations.

The first nation, with its original proposal, talked about cost sharing. We are prepared to enter into cost-sharing agreements. We have done so. I think the actions we have agreed to take are appropriate for the circumstances.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

**POLITICAL PARTY SUBSIDIES**

**Ms. Lise St-Denis (Saint-Maurice—Champlain, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, the measure announced by the government to phase out subsidies to political parties is itself partisan. The Conservative Party is using a parliamentary rule to crush political parties who do not benefit from the visibility of being in power to raise funds.

Will the government, before this House, commit to respecting usual parliamentary procedure for the debate on eliminating political subsidies?

[English]

**Hon. Tim Uppal (Minister of State (Democratic Reform), CPC):** Mr. Speaker, in 2006 our government took big business and big labour out of politics with the Federal Accountability Act.

We are acting quickly to continue bringing transparency to government by phasing out the direct subsidy of political parties. We think money should come from voters, not from corporations, not from unions, and not from government.

Political parties should do their own fundraising and not live off taxpayer-funded handouts.

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**RAIL TRANSPORTATION**

**Hon. Ralph Goodale (Wascana, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, it is now a full year since the rail freight service review was completed. It is over six months since the government promised to implement it. In March the government said it would work with all parties to draft legislation giving shippers the right to enforceable contracts with the railways. Now the government is suggesting a process to avoid legislation.

Which is it: enforce shippers' rights or avoid shippers' rights? I ask for the fourth time, will the legislation be introduced this year?

**Hon. Steven Fletcher (Minister of State (Transport), CPC):** Mr. Speaker, in March of this year our government announced a comprehensive strategy that responds to the findings of the rail freight review. Our government is following up on its commitments to improve the performance of the rail-based supply chain. Stakeholders, all parties and certainly ours, everyone in the commercial sector and people who rely on rail freight will work together to make sure that we can have an efficient and effective rail freight operation in our country. We will be naming a facilitator for this process shortly.

• (1140)

**Hon. Wayne Easter (Malpeque, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, it has been over a year. Clearly the government is dragging its feet on implementing the railway service review. Who gains by the slow response? The railways of course, while farmers pay higher rates for poorer service.

Are the government's efforts to destroy the Canadian Wheat Board really to protect its railway friends? We know it was the Wheat Board that challenged the railways on price gouging. It defended farmers' interests before the CTA and won 14 times against United States grain interests. Just for whom and why is the government making the reckless decision to destroy the Canadian Wheat Board?

**Mr. David Anderson (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Natural Resources and for the Canadian Wheat Board, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, our government remains committed to giving western Canadian grain farmers the marketing freedom that they want and that they deserve. An open market in western Canada will attract investment. It will encourage innovation and will create value-added jobs. It is going to build a stronger Canadian economy.

The member knows that is true. He should join with us in bringing western Canadian farmers the freedom they deserve.

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**DEMOCRATIC REFORM**

**Hon. Stéphane Dion (Saint-Laurent—Cartierville, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister dismissed the Liberals' advice on his Senate bill, but will he listen to independent experts and staunch Conservatives?

Three out of four western academics say that his ill-conceived plan would hurt Alberta and British Columbia. The Prime Minister's former chief of staff, Tom Flanagan, said, "This bill scares me".

Why do the Prime Minister and the Minister of State for Democratic Reform want to hurt their own province?

**Hon. Tim Uppal (Minister of State (Democratic Reform), CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the Liberals' agenda is clear. They would rather support the status quo in the Senate than reasonable and achievable reforms.

Alberta has shown that giving Canadians a say in Senate nominees is not only possible, but it works. We congratulate Premier Alward and his government on committing to give New Brunswickers real input into their Senate representatives.



[Translation]

### G8 SUMMIT

**Ms. Lysane Blanchette-Lamothe (Pierrefonds—Dollard, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, the Auditor General has confirmed that he cannot determine how the amounts allocated to the G8 slush fund were set. In the minutes of one of the meetings of the very select local area leadership group, the MP for Parry Sound—Muskoka stated that the Prime Minister's Office was in charge of determining the budget.

Because the local MP is not talking about local issues, can the foreign affairs minister tell us why the Prime Minister wanted to have a \$50 million slush fund?

[English]

**Hon. John Baird (Minister of Foreign Affairs, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, that of course is not the case. The \$50 million was allocated in budget 2009 as part of Canada's economic action plan. The goal was to spruce up an already beautiful part of our country so we could present our best face to the world. People at these summits stay over 100 kilometres away from the exact summit site. There was also, as is traditional for these types of initiatives, funding made available to thank the region for hosting the world. All 32 of the projects came in on or under budget.

[Translation]

**Ms. Lysane Blanchette-Lamothe (Pierrefonds—Dollard, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, according to the minutes that report what the minister said, amounts over and above the basic budget for the G8 Summit Management Office must be determined by the Prime Minister's Office.

The Conservatives cannot deny what is in the documents uncovered by the NDP. That is why the mayor of Huntsville is embarrassed.

Who approved the slush fund? Was it the Prime Minister, as the President of the Treasury Board said?

[English]

**Hon. John Baird (Minister of Foreign Affairs, CPC):** No, Mr. Speaker.

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### PRESIDENT OF THE TREASURY BOARD

**Mr. Pat Martin (Winnipeg Centre, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, the Auditor General called the monkey business in Muskoka unlike anything he has seen in his 33 years of working in the Auditor General's Office. I would remind members that he was here during the sponsorship scandal.

How can the miscreant minister from Muskoka be the President of the Treasury Board when he himself shows such contempt and disregard for the very Treasury Board guidelines that were put in place to protect us from this kind of partisan political pork barrelling?

**Hon. John Baird (Minister of Foreign Affairs, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I say to my friend from Winnipeg Centre that it will not come as any surprise to him that I disagree with the premise of his question.

### Oral Questions

The Auditor General did review this issue and came forward with a number of observations on how the government could be more open and transparent. No one argues with her good judgment. We have accepted all of her advice.

The good news I can report is that on all 32 public infrastructure projects every single dollar was accounted for and they all went to public infrastructure projects.

The good news is that all of these infrastructure projects, as part of Canada's economic action plan, have created hundreds of thousands of jobs. Even in September, 61,000 net new jobs were—

• (1145)

**The Speaker:** Order, please. The hon. member for Winnipeg Centre.

**Mr. Pat Martin (Winnipeg Centre, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, maybe he did not see the headline: "Rules were broken". The government broke every rule in the book. However, unlike the sponsorship scandal, there is no Chuck Guité here to be the fall guy. In fact, the architect and the mastermind of this whole Muskoka slush fund was the minister himself. We know what happened to Alfonso Gagliano. He got put out on an ice floe.

Why does the government continue to defend this miscreant minister from Muskoka, when he would make a perfect ambassador to, say, Hans Island?

**Hon. John Baird (Minister of Foreign Affairs, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I will not cede sovereignty over Hans Island. We will not send an ambassador to Hans Island because Hans Island is part of this great country. We will not allow the NDP to sellout our sovereignty and give away an island. Shame on this member.

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### EMPLOYMENT

**Mr. Dan Albas (Okanagan—Coquihalla, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, in recent days the NDP has repeatedly talked about higher taxes on Canadians; everything from complaining about our GST reductions, demanding a new tax on everyday financial transactions, or punishing with a \$10 billion-a-year hike on taxes for employers. This NDP high tax agenda is worrying for it would cost Canadian jobs when we can least afford it.

Our Conservative government, on the other hand, is on a positive low tax and pro-job strategy for jobs and growth that actually is working.

Could the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance please update the House on Canada's job market?

**Mrs. Shelly Glover (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I am happy to report that Statistics Canada announced today that over 60,000 net new jobs were created in September. Our job growth shows that we are on the right track.

Indeed, approximately 650,000 net new jobs have been created since July 2009. That is over 90% full-time jobs and nearly 80% of them from the private sector.

*Oral Questions*

However, too many Canadians are still looking for work and the global recovery remains very fragile. That is why we are looking forward to implementing the next phase of Canada's economic action plan and its job creating measures like the hiring credit for small businesses.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

**PENSION PLANS**

**Ms. Rosane Doré Lefebvre (Alfred-Pellan, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, global economic instability is threatening the retirement savings of millions of Canadians. Yet the Conservatives are doubling down on the stock market by moving ahead with their ill-advised pooled registered pension plans. This government must take action to protect the quality of life of retired Canadians.

When will the Conservatives stop gambling with Canadians' pensions and start strengthening the Canada pension plan?

**Mrs. Shelly Glover (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, we have worked hard to enhance retirement security for Canadians. We have reduced taxes for seniors and retirees by \$2 billion, including by allowing pension income splitting. We have reformed the framework for pensions that are under federal jurisdiction in order to better protect retirees. Together with the provinces, we have reviewed the proposals for making other improvements, and we about to implement a new pooled registered pension plan, the PRPP. The PRPP will allow pension plans to be offered at little cost to millions of people who have never had a pension plan before.

[English]

**Ms. Marjolaine Boutin-Sweet (Hochelaga, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, the truth is that in the last quarter stocks fell 12%. Private pension funds were hit extremely hard. We know that pooled registered pension plans do nothing to protect Canadians when the stock market plummets.

We need a stronger public pension plan. Canadians and provincial leaders across the country are demanding basic retirement security. The Canada pension plan can provide this by generating larger and more stable investment returns.

Will the government stop gambling with the future of Canadians and strengthen CPP?

**Mrs. Shelly Glover (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, CPP reforms continue to be examined by ourselves and provincial governments, but I want to note that many provinces share the concerns of small businesses and others if we increase costs during a fragile global recovery.

I want to cite something that was said during the election by Catherine Swift, president and CEO of the Canadian Federation of Independent Business, when she was talking about the NDP's suggestion to double CPP. She said: "That would mean probably about a 60 to 70 per cent increase in premiums from what we understand".

That was very, very worrisome. So any tax breaks that were in the NDP platform were grossly outmatched by what it was going to ding—

• (1150)

**The Speaker:** Order, please. The hon. member for Louis-Saint-Laurent.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

**SERVICE CANADA**

**Ms. Alexandrine Latendresse (Louis-Saint-Laurent, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, government cuts to Service Canada are harming the most vulnerable Canadians. There are places in the country where it is no longer possible to speak to a human being. The telephone system hangs up on people who call before they are even able to speak to an agent. By cutting jobs at Service Canada, the government is choking the system.

Why is the government cutting services for unemployed Canadians?

**Hon. Diane Finley (Minister of Human Resources and Skills Development, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, we are committed to serving Canadian taxpayers responsibly and respecting the money they earn. That is why we are trying to improve the services offered by Service Canada. We are protecting our official languages and are making improvements to the telephone system. We are trying to provide the best service possible to Canadians.

**Ms. Ève Péclet (La Pointe-de-l'Île, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, the government clearly does not understand anything about what the unemployed in this country are going through. Some must even wait up to three months to receive their employment insurance benefits. Waiting periods are already too long, and the government is now adding to them by making cuts to the services offered by Service Canada.

Will the government finally explain why it is preventing unemployed Canadians from accessing the insurance they themselves paid into?

**Hon. Diane Finley (Minister of Human Resources and Skills Development, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the reality is that during the global recession, we added workers to handle the increased volume of employment insurance claims, and we even improved standards. As a result, over 80% of people received their first employment insurance payment within four weeks, compared to 10 weeks under the Liberals.

\* \* \*

**CHAMPLAIN BRIDGE**

**Hon. Denis Coderre (Bourassa, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to come back to the issue of the Champlain Bridge. We will talk about the safety of the current bridge another time, but I want to come back to the issue of the new bridge. There is talk of a public-private partnership, a PPP. Unlike the NDP, we are in agreement with that and we will not change our minds.



The issue of timelines is crucial. Environmental assessments take at least three years. A Mohawk cemetery has been discovered. Very serious negotiations will be needed. There is talk of expropriation and a development plan, and we have yet to touch on public transit.

The people of Montreal and the south shore want timelines. Will the government table timelines?

**Mr. Pierre Poilievre (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Transport, Infrastructure and Communities and for the Federal Economic Development Agency for Southern Ontario, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the hon. member is right—building a bridge like this will take time. Luckily, our government has had confirmation that the Champlain Bridge is safe, and we are working to keep it that way. We are taking the necessary measures to maintain that safety. If the safety of the Champlain Bridge was so important to the opposition parties, they should have supported our budget last March since it included this investment.

\* \* \*

[English]

### THE ENVIRONMENT

**Ms. Kirsty Duncan (Etobicoke North, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, on Tuesday the Minister of the Environment stated unequivocally that we do not muzzle our scientists. Yesterday, we were told that Environment Canada scientist Dr. Tarasick was available to speak to responsible media, but the minister's office has denied access to the *National Post*, *Ottawa Citizen* and *The Gazette*.

If Environment Canada's ozone scientists are not being muzzled, why have these newspapers been denied access? Does the minister not consider these news organizations to be responsible media?

• (1155)

**Ms. Michelle Rempel (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of the Environment, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, we certainly are proud of the work of our scientists and the contributions they make to protecting Canada's environment. Ministers speak for the government. That is why we give answers in question period.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

### FOREIGN AFFAIRS

**Ms. Hélène Laverdière (Laurier-Sainte-Marie, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, yesterday, at the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Development, the Conservatives denied the request of the opposition members to hear His Excellency the Ambassador of Tunisia, who was in the room. The hon. member for Mississauga—Erindale said that the government would strenuously object. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss the government's policies on the elections in Tunisia.

Since when does the government get to decide who the committees can hear from? Since when are public servants the only ones allowed to testify?

**Hon. John Baird (Minister of Foreign Affairs, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the members of the committee are free to do their work. That is up to them. I will leave those decisions to the members of that committee. While I am here, I would like to congratulate the

hon. member on her new position as the foreign affairs critic for the official opposition. I am happy to work with her.

**Mrs. Sana Hassainia (Verchères—Les Patriotes, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, the opposition members were willing to give up their allocated speaking time to hear the ambassador. By refusing to allow him to speak, the Conservatives are sending the wrong message to the Tunisians who want to participate in the democratic transition. Time is of the essence. They have an opportunity to elect a constituent assembly that will lead the country during the creation of a real democracy. Out of 28 countries that were asked to allow expatriates to vote, only Canada refused.

Will the minister commit today to giving Tunisians living in Canada the tools to participate in the democratic transition?

**Hon. John Baird (Minister of Foreign Affairs, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to say that Canadians who are also citizens of Tunisia are free to vote in Canada during the Tunisian elections, if they are eligible. The important thing is that Canada could not be part of a foreign constituency. However, there are more than a dozen countries that have participated in elections here in Canada, and Tunisia was free to do the same.

\* \* \*

[English]

### FEDERAL-PROVINCIAL RELATIONS

**Mr. Joe Preston (Elgin—Middlesex—London, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, since 2006 our government has committed itself to maintaining good relationships with the provinces and territories from coast to coast. Our government has also made it clear that we are the only party that stands up for Newfoundlanders and Labradorians.

Could the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs tell the House what our government is doing to deliver results to the people of Newfoundland and Labrador?

[Member spoke in the Innu language]

**Hon. Peter Penashue (Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs and President of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, this is the first time that the Innu language has been heard in this House.

While other parties play politics with the province, our government delivers results for the people of Newfoundland and Labrador. Whether we talk about Lower Churchill, fighting for the sealing industry, or of course scrapping the long gun registry, we are the ones delivering for the province.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

### NORTHERN DEVELOPMENT

**Mr. Francis Scarpaleggia (Lac-Saint-Louis, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, an internal audit of CanNor has found that the agency has violated almost every financial management rule since its creation, including all the directives regarding expense control. Internal audits are not the friends of this government. It should be pointed out that the agency has had five chief financial officers since its creation.

*Oral Questions*

Why is there total chaos at this agency, which is supposed to spearhead the government's strategy for the far north? Does this indicate how little importance the Prime Minister attaches to this strategy and this region?

[English]

**Hon. Leona Aglukkaq (Minister of Health and Minister of the Canadian Northern Economic Development Agency, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I also encourage the member opposite to visit the north, Nunavut, the Northwest Territories and the Yukon, to see what is really happening on the ground, where we are investing in many development opportunities and opening mines during a global recession.

This is a draft audit and, as I stated yesterday, we take all audits very seriously. I look forward to receiving the final audit and we will address the issues based on the audit.

\* \* \*

● (1200)

[Translation]

**CANADA LABOUR CODE**

**Mr. Robert Aubin (Trois-Rivières, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, harmonizing the language rights of workers in Quebec only makes sense and is a crucial step in recognizing the Quebec nation. Indeed, why should the employees of a chartered bank not enjoy the same rights as the employees of a credit union in Quebec? Other parties have tried to divide Quebecers on this issue, but we in the NDP are building bridges between all communities. That is why I introduced a bill this week to amend the Canada Labour Code.

Will the Conservatives work with the NDP to harmonize the rights of Quebec employees working in businesses under federal jurisdiction with those of employees working for businesses under provincial jurisdiction?

**Mr. Jacques Gourde (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Works and Government Services, for Official Languages and for the Economic Development Agency for the Regions of Quebec, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member for his question. I would like to congratulate him on his work.

The government is determined to continue to protect and promote our country's two official languages.

\* \* \*

[English]

**INTERNATIONAL TRADE**

**Hon. Michael Chong (Wellington—Halton Hills, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I think it is safe to say that the government has undertaken one of the most ambitious expansions of its trade agenda in the last two decades. It is doing so because it understands that increased trade means increased demand for Canadian goods and services and increased economic growth. It also understands that over half of the Canadian economy and one in five Canadian workers depend on these trade agreements.

Because this file is so important, would the government update the House on its trade agenda?

**Mr. Gerald Keddy (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of International Trade, for the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency and for the Atlantic Gateway, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, yesterday, the Minister of International Trade was, at his request, before committee discussing the enormous benefits of our job creating, pro-trade plan.

Today, the minister will embark upon a trade mission to China, because we know that when Canadian businesses grow in this priority market, they create jobs and prosperity here at home.

Despite the NDP's opposition, we will continue to pursue our job creating, pro-trade, low tax plan, a plan that created over 650,000 jobs since July 2009.

\* \* \*

**HUMAN RESOURCES**

**Mr. Peter Stoffer (Sackville—Eastern Shore, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, on behalf of all of us here, I would like to wish you, all my colleagues in the House of Commons and all Canadians a very happy Thanksgiving.

Here is one thing the Conservatives will never talk about with respect to the plan they have over there. Since they took power, 305,000 additional Canadians now use the food bank, which means that a total of 910,000 Canadians this Thanksgiving who will need to rely on the charity of a food bank to have sustenance over this weekend, including many veterans.

Instead of dingwalling Parliament and using jets and slush funds to help themselves, when will the Conservatives introduce real policies to help the real poor in Canada?

**Hon. Diane Finley (Minister of Human Resources and Skills Development, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the NDP member's concern for the poor would be a lot more credible if he would actually do something to help them.

Our government, in spite of the NDP, has introduced many measures to help the poor. To help them get over the welfare wall there is the working income tax benefit. We have lowered taxes, taking one million Canadians off the tax roll, leaving more money in their pockets to spend. We have increased the guaranteed income supplement for seniors, not once, but twice.

If it were up to the NDP, 14,000 affordable housing projects would not be under way to help Canadians.

\* \* \*

**THE ENVIRONMENT**

**Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP):** Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of the Environment to continuously try to unravel the muzzling of government scientists.

I accept that the minister would never knowingly mislead this House but his answers do not accord with the facts.

I have an email here to a responsible journalist with Postmedia in which it states that "an interview cannot be granted" with the scientist in question.



I would urge the parliamentary secretary not to tell us that the minister speaks for all scientists. The reality is that, if the minister is not muzzling these scientists, and I accept that he is not, will he investigate who in the Government of Canada is muzzling these scientists?

**Ms. Michelle Rempel (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of the Environment, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I know the minister has addressed this issue on numerous occasions.

However, before I answer the question, I would like to congratulate my hon. colleague at Finance on Canada's new job numbers. The global recovery remains fragile but this government is working hard right now to get Parliament to implement the next phase of our action plan.

I encourage my colleague across the aisle to vote in support of our budget measures, which include funding for climate change adaptation. And, ministers do speak for the government.

\* \* \*

• (1205)

## POINTS OF ORDER

### ORAL QUESTIONS

**Mr. Pat Martin (Winnipeg Centre, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, during question period, I referred to the President of the Treasury Board as the miscreant minister from Muskoka. I have since been reminded what the definition of "miscreant" actually is. It means a wretch or a villain. Notwithstanding my feelings about the Muskoka slush fund, I do not believe the President of the Treasury Board is either a wretch or a villain. Therefore, I would like to withdraw the word "miscreant", and I apologize for misusing that term.

While I have the floor, I wonder if the Minister of Foreign Affairs would like to correct the answer that he gave to my question when he pointed out that budget 2009 contained all the spending for the G8, whereas budget 2009 did not contain any reference to the G8 or the legacy fund. In fact, the President of the Treasury Board had to tell the mayor of Huntsville to hold off putting out a press release because it was not contained in the budget.

**The Speaker:** Order, please. I appreciate the first part of the hon. member's point of order but, of course, the second part was not a point of order but a continuation of debate.

### COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE

**Hon. Wayne Easter (Malpeque, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I was shocked by the glowing remarks from the parliamentary secretary about the appearance of the Minister of International Trade at committee yesterday because, in our most important marketplace, where we are being shut out by buy American, the chair of the committee would not allow questions to be put to the minister on the buy American file. That is not the way a committee is supposed to operate. The parliamentary secretary can be glowing but we should have the right to ask any questions we want.

**The Speaker:** That is not a point of order but a continuation of debate. The member might like to take it up in a future question period or perhaps in committee where it seems to have occurred in the first place.

### Routine Proceedings

## ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

[English]

### STRENGTHENING MILITARY JUSTICE IN THE DEFENCE OF CANADA ACT

**Hon. Peter Van Loan (for the Minister of National Defence)** moved for leave to introduce Bill C-15, An Act to amend the National Defence Act and to make consequential amendments to other Acts.

(Motions deemed adopted, bill read the first time and printed)

\* \* \*

[Translation]

### SECURITY OF TENURE OF MILITARY JUDGES ACT

**Hon. Peter Van Loan (for the Minister of National Defence)** moved for leave to introduce Bill C-16, An Act to amend the National Defence Act (military judges).

(Motions deemed adopted, bill read the first time and printed)

\* \* \*

[English]

### VETERANS WITH SERVICE-RELATED BRAIN INJURIES ACT

**Ms. Kirsty Duncan (Etobicoke North, Lib.)** moved for leave to introduce Bill C-330, An Act to establish the Advisory Committee for Effective Treatment and Rehabilitation of Veterans with Service-Related Brain Injuries.

She said: Mr. Speaker, my bill aims to establish an advisory committee for the effective treatment and rehabilitation of veterans with service-related brain injuries and sets out the composition, mandate and duties of the committee.

Specifically, an advisory committee would be established, consisting of representatives from Veterans Affairs, the Department of National Defence, officers and non-commissioned members of the Canadian Forces, veterans suffering service-related brain injury, et cetera.

The committee would evaluate the care and support provided by the Department of Veterans Affairs to veterans with a brain injury; identify facilities where program enhancement is needed; identify successful programs for the treatment and rehabilitation of veterans with a service-related brain injury and recommend implementation; advise the minister on policies, research needs and priorities and the appropriate allocation of resources; and would report to the minister on the measures put in place and resources supplied.

I thank our veterans, physicians, the Brain Injury Association of Canada and the Neurological Health Charities Canada who have supported this. I hope all hon. members will support this bill.

(Motions deemed adopted, bill read the first time and printed)

• (1210)

**Mr. Greg Rickford:** Mr. Speaker, I would ask for the unanimous consent of the House to revert to tabling of documents.

*Government Orders*

**The Speaker:** Does the hon. member have unanimous consent to revert to tabling of documents?

Some hon. members: Agreed

\* \* \*

**LABRADOR INUIT LAND CLAIMS AGREEMENT  
IMPLEMENTATION COORDINATING COMMITTEE**

**Mr. Greg Rickford (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development, for the Canadian Northern Economic Development Agency and for the Federal Economic Development Initiative for Northern Ontario, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, under the provisions of Standing Order 32(2), I have the honour to table, in both official languages, copies of the 2009-10 annual report of the Labrador Inuit Land Claims Agreement Implementation Coordinating Committee.

\* \* \*

**HOUSE OF COMMONS**

**Hon. Gordon O'Connor (Minister of State and Chief Government Whip, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, there have been consultations, and I believe you will find agreement for the following two motions. I move:

That, notwithstanding the provisions of any Standing Order, for the remainder of 2011, when a recorded division is to be held on Tuesday, Wednesday or Thursday, except recorded divisions deferred to the conclusion of oral questions, the bells to call in the members shall be sounded for not more than 30 minutes.

**The Speaker:** Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

(Motion agreed to)

\* \* \*

**COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE**

**NATIONAL DEFENCE**

**Hon. Gordon O'Connor (Minister of State and Chief Government Whip, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I move:

That, in relation to its study of the maintaining of the readiness of the Canadian Forces, 12 members of the Standing Committee on National Defence be authorized to travel to Wainwright, Alberta, from October 16 to 18, 2011, and that the necessary staff accompany the committee.

**The Speaker:** Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

(Motion agreed to)

**Ms. Elizabeth May:** Mr. Speaker, I was made aware of the general nature of the motion for unanimous consent for the committee to travel, but I wonder if the Minister of State and Chief Government Whip could assure us that all means will be taken to ensure that travel is in the most economical fashion possible, that commercial airways will be used and that it will be very economically accounted for so the government does not have to again explain extraordinary use of airplanes and so on?

**Hon. Gordon O'Connor:** Mr. Speaker, I would remind the member that this is committee travel, not government travel. All committee travel is vetted for the most economical means of travel.

[Translation]

**QUESTIONS ON THE ORDER PAPER**

**Ms. Lois Brown (Newmarket—Aurora, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I ask that all questions be allowed to stand.

**The Speaker:** Is it agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

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**GOVERNMENT ORDERS**

[Translation]

**KEEPING CANADA'S ECONOMY AND JOBS GROWING  
ACT**

The House resumed consideration of the motion that Bill C-13, An Act to implement certain provisions of the 2011 budget as updated on June 6, 2011 and other measures, be read the second time and referred to a committee.

**The Speaker:** The hon. member for La Pointe-de-l'Île has five minutes remaining for questions and comments. The hon. member for Cariboo—Prince George.

[English]

**Mr. Richard Harris (Cariboo—Prince George, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the member's presentation was very eloquent. I am sure many members, like I, have been impressed by her oratory skills. I hope to hear a lot more.

Unfortunately, the member opposite appears to be locked into that NDP ideology straightjacket of negativity. It is a shame that such oratory skills should be wasted on the negative.

I would like to offer the member some positive things she might want to consider.

No government in the history of Canada has taken as many people off the tax rolls as this Conservative government since 2008. No government has put more effort and had more success in job creation as the government. No government has ever done so much to help seniors in our country. No government has ever given such incredible tax benefits to Canadian families. No government has ever retained such a strong, stable, financial position.

If the member wants something negative to talk about, why does she not talk about the fact that the New Democratic Party voted against every one of those great things the government has ever done?

● (1215)

**Ms. Ève Pécelet:** Mr. Speaker, I know the member maybe does not want me to talk a lot, because his question was pretty much political statements. Therefore, I will take my time to say that the NDP has proposals. The government refused to listen to us and even integrated some of our propositions in its budget saying that it was its idea and that the NDP wanted higher taxes.

I have some proposals. Non-refundable tax credits are not good for most Canadians, but refundable tax credits are. This is one of our propositions. Did the government listen to us? No, not at all.



**Mr. Richard Harris:** Higher taxes.

**Ms. Ève Péclet:** Not higher taxes, refundable tax credits.

I want to talk about this ideological—

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bruce Stanton):** Order, please. There is only five minutes for questions and comments. I am sure other members may want to question the hon. member.

The hon. member for Surrey North.

**Mr. Jasbir Sandhu (Surrey North, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I heard my colleague from the Conservative side talk about lowering taxes for families and seniors. The Conservatives need to get out of this Ottawa bubble and go talk to their constituents. They should look at the gas price and the cost food. They are going up. There are taxes on those things and people pay taxes on a daily basis.

This is the question I have for the member. We have seen over a period of time that small businesses drive our economy. For some reason, the Conservatives seem to be against small businesses. Why are they against small businesses?

[Translation]

**Ms. Ève Péclet:** Mr. Speaker, the government is giving small and medium-sized businesses a temporary tax credit for one year. It is an insult to the intelligence of all Canadians to say that this is going to solve all the problems. The NDP proposed that the government give employers a rebate of \$4,500 on Employment Insurance premiums, the full amount of the employer's contribution to the Canada pension plan. This would guarantee that all employers and workers would not have to pay their bills indirectly through higher premiums.

This is a positive proposal, a solution that the NDP is offering to the government, which still refuses to negotiate with us, by gagging us and passing motions to limit debate, while giving \$2 billion in tax breaks to large corporations. That is what the government is doing and that is what all Canadians need to remember. The government is trying to lie to them by saying that it has created 600,000 new jobs, but this is not true. As I said in my speech, I have the figures to prove that this is completely false. We are still 250,000 jobs short of the number we had before the recession.

All Canadians must remember that this government does not have their interests at heart. Rather, the government is concerned with the interests of its friends—the oil companies and large corporations that give it money. Today, the government is trying to put the blame on the NDP by saying that all the NDP wants to do is increase taxes, but that is not true.

[English]

**Mr. Greg Rickford (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development, for the Canadian Northern Economic Development Agency and for the Federal Economic Development Initiative for Northern Ontario, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, that is a hard act to follow.

I appreciate the opportunity to speak to the budget implementation act. I also want to thank the constituents of the great Kenora riding for their ongoing support of the great work that the government has been doing in our vast region of more than 326,760 square kilometres.

### *Government Orders*

We have 8 municipalities and 42 first nations communities, 25 of them not accessible by road. Suffice it to say, there was a lot of work that needed to be done and we were very grateful for Canada's economic action plan. I will talk a little about phase one today before I get into phase two in appreciation of some of the great things that have gone on in our region.

Pre-emptively it is worth saying that northwestern Ontarians were very familiar with the recession. We plunged into it long before most other parts of Canada. The forest sector took a very hard hit well before the rest of the country plunged into recession.

As we moved through Canada's economic action plan and started to get strategic about what investments needed to be made in Kenora, we found there were structural challenges with which Canada's economic action plan helped Kenora. I will talk about them in just a few minutes.

In phase one we had very few, if any, of our mills open. There was one left in Dryden, but unfortunately the paper production of that mill had disappeared and we needed to take action as mills were closing around the region. The Mayor of Red Lake said that there may be some sort of gold boom on, but it was not being experienced per se by folks in Red Lake, Cochenour and Balmertown.

The complement of towns that form the municipality of Red Lake were under siege. They were stretched to their limits. Getting a hotel in Red Lake would mean booking it months in advance because people were there for long-term stays. The commercial, residential and industrial capacity of the town simply was not there.

We got to work and started to build industrial and commercial development sites in Dryden and Red Lake. We felt confident that we would come out of this recession stronger than ever. Short of fixing a couple of key structural defects, Canada's economic action plan was going to make the difference.

I will give a couple of examples of that, ones that I take very seriously. I have a great deal of pride in working with town and city officers to make these dreams come true.

In Dryden, under the green pulp and paper transformation program, the federal government was able to grant just over \$22 million to make capital upgrades to the environmental capacity of the processing that took place to make a world-class kind of pulp. Previously, the mill had been at 85% energy self-sustainability through its residual liquor production, but to be effective environmentally and to be a mill that the region, Canada and Domtar could depend on moving forward that number had to go up.

The green pulp and paper transformation program came in, and I am happy to report today that as of December 1 of this year, when the final phase of the installation is complete, the prediction is that it will be at more than 110% energy self-sufficient. That is great news. We are taking care of the environment and correcting a structural defect that we faced in northwestern Ontario.

### Government Orders

The failure of our provincial counterparts to provide a competitive industrial hydro rate was a challenge for mills and any sort of production that would go on, and continues to go on. We were able to fix that.

• (1220)

We recently heard from AbitibiBowater and the city officials in Ignace with whom I have worked very closely. My colleague from Beauce and I had an opportunity to open a new water treatment facility there and make some upgrades as a result of some unforeseen challenges which the tundra posed. Ignace is going to have a brand new mill. It is actually an old mill, but it is going to be rehabilitated and it will be, as the officials from AbitibiBowater told me, like new. This is going to employ 100 people in Ignace within the next couple of years as the mill is rehabilitated.

They were able to do this because the city officials and AbitibiBowater felt comfortable with the great work that we had done with the foundational infrastructure pieces, such as resurfacing roads in that area and rebuilding or replacing major parts of the water and waste water treatment facility. I could go on but these are important things that Canada's economic action plan brought.

I could talk about the beautiful city of Kenora which even some of us locals are having trouble recognizing because there are so many new great facilities to celebrate our harbourfront and welcome people from around the world to our magnificent world-class city.

As I only have three or four more minutes left, I want to jump into the final part of my discussion on the budget implementation bill.

I will highlight very quickly a few of the things we are sensitive to in northwestern Ontario. Obviously there are the hiring credits for small businesses and tax support for clean energy generation. I mentioned the mill and the great work that was done. There is the mineral exploration tax credit. The ring of fire, the chromite in northwestern Ontario, represents an opportunity for first nations communities and non-first nations communities. It is one of the largest chromite reserves known to the world to date. On the gas tax fund, I was told by mayor after mayor that they were relieved that not only did we double it, but the \$2 billion permanent annual investment would provide predictable long-term funding for municipalities. This is no small practical or intellectual matter. Municipalities are going to be able to use this legislated guaranteed resource as another instrument to manage their municipal affairs.

The wage earner protection program provides up to \$3,400 in 2011 to workers for unpaid wages, severance or termination. We are helping families with caregiver tax credits. That can be a special burden in the smaller towns of northwestern Ontario. There is the children's art tax credit. We are removing the limit on claimable medical expenses. These are things that matter to northwestern Ontarians and all Canadians.

I want to talk about a couple of things that are making a real difference. We are forgiving the debt for doctors and nurses serving in underserved communities. The entire Kenora region is underserved in this regard. In my prior career I worked to recruit physicians. I was a nurse working in those communities. I can fully appreciate the challenges we have, but is it not great that when new doctors and nurses come out of school and if they move to our

communities, they will be able to have significant portions of their debt relieved. We are very pleased with that. I encourage all my colleagues to support this policy.

We are helping apprentices in skilled trades. We are going to be twinning the Trans-Canada Highway from the Manitoba border in. HRSDC has played an important role in helping to provide the kind of skills training people will need to help in twinning that highway.

In closing, there are a number of things which have been discussed at length here today. I wanted to highlight some of the things that are particularly important to northwestern Ontario and to thank the government for the great work that it continues to do for the great Kenora riding.

• (1225)

[Translation]

**Ms. Ève Péclet (La Pointe-de-l'Île, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I completely agree with what my colleague had to say about nurses and doctors in rural areas. That is an excellent measure, but it does not address the doctor shortage.

Since there is absolutely nothing set out in the budget right now, can my colleague tell me what the government will do to increase enrolment in medical schools, decrease student debt and prioritize health care training programs? Professionals are being relocated, but there is still a shortage. Why not recognize the credentials of new Canadian citizens who have settled here? What will the government do about this shortage?

[English]

**Mr. Greg Rickford:** Mr. Speaker, with the greatest of respect, the member is wrong on a couple of key points.

As a general statement, improving federal financial assistance for students is a key part of the budget implementation bill. It is allowing students to make more money without penalty while they are in school, extending eligibility for Canada student loans and increasing the income threshold for full- and part-time students, giving more families access to Canada student loans.

With respect to physicians and nurses, I am glad the hon. member has given me another opportunity to speak to that.

Obviously we have 25 isolated first nations communities. We have a wonderful program through Lakehead University that is bringing doctors from all around the country. It is the benchmark. It serves one of the largest regions in the world, unbeknownst to most. That is attracting doctors to the region. When they get up there they fall in love with the north, just as I did. They love the pickerel that we eat up there, and some of my colleagues have tasted it so they would know.



We think that is an important strategy. We are providing incentives to attract people to the medical school in our region and to explore our region and once they get there, they are there to stay.

• (1230)

[Translation]

**Ms. Marjolaine Boutin-Sweet (Hochelaga, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, the Conservative government is so proud of its budget. But according to the chief economist at BMO Nesbitt Burns, Sherry Cooper, the misplaced belief that the road to economic prosperity is paved by near-term fiscal tightening, as espoused by our own Prime Minister and British Prime Minister David Cameron last week, shows we have learned nothing from Herbert Hoover's response to the Great Depression.

Does my colleague not realize that it is dangerous for the Canadian economy to go ahead with the planned cuts?

[English]

**Mr. Greg Rickford:** Mr. Speaker, what is dangerous, and we are hearing this loud and clear from people in the great Kenora riding, is that they do not want a \$10 billion tax bill. That is what is dangerous.

We heard just today that our unemployment rate is now down to 7.1%. There are 60,000 more jobs this month alone. That is a trajectory we want to celebrate.

I ask my colleagues across the floor to take a look at what Canada's economic action plan has done in their communities, such as putting up facilities and structures that have made the difference, employing people, putting people to work and increasing our tax base through higher employment levels, not by jacking up taxes by \$10 billion.

That, with the greatest of respect that I can muster on that point, would be a dangerous thing.

**Mr. Peter Stoffer (Sackville—Eastern Shore, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, the hon. member talked about a \$10 billion tax increase, but that is exactly what the Conservatives have done. This year with payroll tax increases and next year with payroll tax increases, it is projected that for employment insurance and CPP premiums, another \$10 billion will be deducted from workers' salaries.

Why does he say that we want a \$10 billion tax increase when they have already done it?

**Mr. Greg Rickford:** Mr. Speaker, this gives me an opportunity to talk about the importance of small business in the great Kenora riding.

Obviously small business is the economic engine of the country, but in our vast region, it is really what keeps our economy rolling. Providing a temporary hiring credit for small business to keep corporate taxes low for those small businesses to thrive is really the kind of dynamic economic environment the government can support for small businesses.

In that regard, my constituents are very pleased with that policy position.

**Mr. Peter Stoffer (Sackville—Eastern Shore, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, before the hon. member for Kenora leaves, I want him to know that I agree with him on two things: one, pickerel is very good;

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and two, small business tax reductions are always positive. However, I will tell him that the multinational corporate tax rates the Conservatives are planning would be wrong because they would shift the tax burden from multinational corporations to small businesses and individuals.

While I am speaking to Bill C-13, I would remind members that it is the Conservatives who increased payroll taxes for this year and it is the Conservatives who will once again increase payroll taxes next year. I would remind them that every economist out there, every student who studies economics, every person who understands fiscal responsibility knows it is payroll taxes and income taxes that are a drain on our society. It is simply wrong that hard-working people have to pay those exorbitant taxes, yet the multinational corporations get further tax cuts.

I remind this House that in the 1960s corporate tax rates were in the 40% range and tax rates for individuals were in the 20% range, but now they have completely flipped around. Corporate tax rates have gone down to 15% but tax rates for individuals are into the high 40% range. This is why Canadians say they are taxed too much. Add provincial and municipal taxes to that and there is outrage. Yet the Conservatives constantly say that it is the NDP that would raise taxes.

With the greatest respect, I remind everyone that it is the Conservatives who raise these taxes. That is the truth.

There is something that Bill C-13 and all the Conservatives' budget implementation bills never talk about. I have scoured the pages of all the Conservatives' budgets and not once did I see the two words "food banks". Twenty-seven senators were appointed by the Prime Minister in one year at a cost over 20 years of \$100 million. The Conservatives are still appointing their hacks and flacks to the Senate, but here is their economic action plan for the poor: there is none.

In February 2006 when the Conservatives took power, there were 604,000 Canadians using food banks, but now, 910,000 Canadians are using food banks. It is bad enough that some Canadians would have to beg for food for themselves and their families, but what is worse is that in the city of Calgary, the richest city in Canada, in 2005 a food bank opened up for veterans only. Fifty-eight veterans were there as the first customers of that food bank. The volunteers at the food bank do a wonderful job looking after those veterans. Last year over 200 veterans used that food bank in the richest city in the country.

As a person who was born in Holland, whose parents were liberated by those heroes, I say that is a sin, a shame and the fault of the Conservative government that the heroes of our country would have to do that. The ones who passed away we honour in our Memorial Chamber as we do those who are buried in over 72 countries around the world. It is a sin and a shame. The Conservatives should hang their heads in shame. As we celebrate Thanksgiving with our friends and families, I can go to a store and buy food. Most of my friends and family will purchase their food at a store or go to a farm to get their food. But many veterans and their families and many other Canadians will have to go to a food bank.

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Mr. Speaker, I do not know if you yourself have ever used a food bank, but I volunteer at one in my riding. It is the most humbling, upsetting experience to see people who at one time had a job have to stand in line at a food bank. They are asked a million questions about who they are in order to get food. This is occurring in one of the richest countries in the world. All projections are that next year there will be a million Canadians who have to use a food bank. That is the entire population of New Brunswick and P.E.I.

Is that the track record of the Conservatives? Unfortunately, yes. That is a shame. Does their budget talk about that? No.

• (1235)

Here is another thing about their budget. The Conservatives crow and brag about a \$3,000 tax credit for firefighters. All the firefighters think that they are getting \$3,000 out of that, but they are not. They are getting 15% of \$3,000 to a maximum of \$450. They already get a \$1,000 tax credit. Therefore, it is either or. They do not tell us that in the budget.

The \$500 arts credit is not \$500. It is 15% of \$500. It is \$75. It is similar to when we buy an item and the company offers a mail-in rebate. Most Canadians will not hold onto those receipts and subject themselves to an audit to get \$75. It is a myth. It would be good if they said it was \$500 clear. If they said it was \$3,000 clear for paramedics and firefighters that would be good. However, it is simply not true. It is similar to when they gave parents \$1,200 a year to look after their own kids through the child tax benefit. That is not true at all. That \$1,200 is taxable. They did not tell us that when it came out in the budget.

These are the sneaky ways the Conservatives try to pull the wool over the eyes of many Canadians. It is time to stop picking on the sheep of this country. They should not be pulling the wool over anyone's eyes. They should at least try to be honest and forthright about what they are doing. It is absolutely incredible.

I look at this issue in terms of veterans and their families. I will give the government credit in that there have been some improvements since it has come here.

I will give the government top marks for the income splitting plan on pensions, which is a very good thing to do for seniors. I personally thank the hon. members for that because I plan to use it if and when I ever leave politics. I know some of the Conservatives would like me to leave a little earlier, and I appreciate their sentiment. That is a good plan. However, it does not help anybody who is poor. It does not help anybody who is using a food bank. It does not help anyone who is homeless.

While I am speaking of the homeless, is it not a shame that a growing number of those veterans who once wore this country's uniform are homeless?

I will add an anecdote to this. A few years ago we had the consecration of the Queen's colours at the Garrison Grounds in Halifax. Governor General Michaëlle Jean came down. She was wearing a military uniform. She said one of the most poignant things I have ever heard. She said, "I am so proud as a Canadian to wear this uniform because when I was a little girl in Haiti I was afraid of uniforms". This shows us the type of country we have.

I ask the Conservatives to stop looking after their corporate buddies, to stop the \$50 million slush fund for their ridings, to stop getting gold-embossed cards, and to stop taking Challenger jets or helicopters to fly from fishing camps to lobster festivals. We call that "Dingwalling". When the front bench starts to "Dingwall" the Canadian people it means a level of arrogance is setting in. That is when the backbenchers start getting nervous. I have been around long enough to see what happened when the Liberals did that. The government is not entitled to its entitlements, but Canadians are entitled to proper governance.

Bill C-13 does absolutely nothing for the poor and the homeless veterans of the country, or for the aboriginals on reserves who unfortunately are committing suicide at a record rate. These are the issues facing our country.

Most of us can look after ourselves and we do a good job of it. However, there are millions who deserve the government's attention. I ask that the government, once and for all, have a national food strategy so that Canadians will no longer have to line up at a food bank to get sustenance, especially during Thanksgiving weekend.

• (1240)

**Mr. Paul Calandra (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Canadian Heritage, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, what a load of garbage coming from the member. Whenever we have brought a proposal forward, whether it was to support our military, to support our veterans or to help unemployed people, the member and his party have voted against it every single time. He gets up in front of the cameras and feigns indignation as if he actually cares about the people that we on this side of the House are trying to help. However, when the member gets the opportunity what does he do? He stands in his place and votes against those very same Canadians that the government has been helping since we were elected. He does so on every single issue.

To make matters worse, when the NDP had an opportunity to stop a Liberal government from slashing funding for health care, for social programs and education what did it do? It cut a deal with that same Liberal government to keep it in office as opposed to throwing it out.

The member has to answer to his constituents and to Canadians why it is that every time he had the opportunity to vote for Canadians with the government he stood in his place and voted against them.

**Mr. Peter Stoffer:** Mr. Speaker, as I am a six time member of Parliament, I think my constituents have answered that question well.

Let us go back to what the member said about serving Canadians. In 2005, the current Prime Minister wrote and signed a letter to Joyce Carter of Cape Breton which said that if the Conservatives formed government, every single widow and widower of a World War II and Korean veteran would immediately get VIP service. Two years after that, less than 10% of the widows and widowers had received help. Does the member think I would vote for that? Absolutely not.



The same Prime Minister, who was then in opposition, and Greg Thompson were at a meeting in Gagetown. He said that every person affected by chemical spraying in Gagetown from 1958 to 1984 would be compensated by the government. The fact is there were 300,000 people who could have qualified, but less than 5,000 received compensation.

If the member wonders why I stand to criticize and vote against them, I do it because their promises are false and hollow.

The fact is that the many veterans and people affected by chemical spraying, as well as the widows and widowers of our heroes deserve much better from the government.

● (1245)

**Ms. Kirsty Duncan (Etobicoke North, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member for talking about the vulnerable and those who go hungry.

This has been Feeding Toronto's Hungry Students Week. We feed 110,000 children every morning. One child in four goes to school hungry. Hungry children cannot learn. Their learning capabilities are affected by how recently they have eaten. Malnutrition in early life can limit long-term intellectual development. We know that access to safe and healthy food is a right of every individual. Canada is one of the few industrialized countries without a national nutrition program.

Does the hon. member think that the federal government should be talking with the provinces and territories to end child hunger in this country?

**Mr. Peter Stoffer:** Mr. Speaker, that is a sensible question. My hon. colleague is a very compassionate member of the House of Commons, as is the member for Saanich—Gulf Islands, who I hope recovers well from her hip surgery.

The government should not just be talking to the provinces and territories, I would highly recommend it also talk with school boards, new immigrant groups and various groups that can help. The reality is that 110,000 people in the largest city in Canada rely on volunteers for food. Teachers should be teaching; they should not be serving buffets to children, but thank God they and the parents do because without them, those kids would not have a hope.

If the member went back five years, I bet she would find that there were a lot less than 110,000. Now more and more people are having to do that. Unfortunately, that is the track record of the Conservative Government of Canada.

[Translation]

**Mr. Tarik Brahma (Saint-Jean, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to congratulate the hon. member for Sackville—Eastern Shore for his explanations. He has talked about a very interesting subject, the effect of announcements made with regard to tax credits. There is a difference between refundable tax credits and those that are not. I would like him to speak more about the use of these announcements to mask credits that are not what they purport to be.

[English]

**Mr. Peter Stoffer:** Mr. Speaker, this is a smoke and mirrors game. The government gives and then takes away. An example would be Bill C-55. The government moved ahead on the veterans charter and rightfully so. That was a good thing. We asked for a much bigger

door, but what it did was make the benefit taxable. It calls the NDP the tax and spend party. The Conservative Party is the give and tax party.

**Mr. Pierre Lemieux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Agriculture, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, it is a great honour and privilege for me to rise in the House today to once again speak on our budget.

[Translation]

This budget is extremely important for Canadians and the citizens of my riding. We are taking their concerns and their needs into account. Consequently, I strongly encourage the opposition to support our initiatives.

[English]

I am proud to speak to various points in budget 2011 which my constituents are eager to see implemented.

As our government introduces legislation for its low tax plan, I would like to note the support we have received from Canadians for our focus on protecting existing jobs, creating new jobs, securing Canada's recovery from the global economic recession, and improving the well-being of Canadians over the long term.

Canadians were proud to learn that Canada has the strongest job growth record in the G7. In fact, as was mentioned in question period today, we added another 60,000 net new jobs to the economy.

However, Canadians understand that we are not immune to global economic turbulence and that it is essential for us to implement the next phase of our economic action plan.

In my riding, especially, businesses are looking forward to the new temporary hiring credit, which would lessen the financial burden of additional hiring. As a rural riding, Glengarry—Prescott—Russell has a large number of agricultural businesses. I have heard from the farming community that the hiring credit is particularly good news for farm operations that are looking to expand.

That is only one of many positive examples.

● (1250)

[Translation]

Implementation of this hiring credit comes just after 2011 was designated the Year of the Entrepreneur by our government. Recognition for hard-working entrepreneurs could not be more timely because they make a vital contribution to the survival of our communities. As we all know, they are engines of the local economy and job creation, especially in the rural areas of ridings such as mine.

Our government promised to help small businesses get through these difficult economic times. Businesses in Glengarry—Prescott—Russell are not immune to these difficult times and will benefit tremendously from this measure in the 2011 budget.

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Since the federal election in May, we have been promising Canadians that we would phase out the per vote direct subsidy of political parties over the next few years.

We will now deliver on that promise, which will save taxpayers up to \$30 million a year. Eliminating this subsidy is what Canadians want because it ensures that political parties remain in close touch with them. That is what the opposition is afraid of. Parties will have to focus their efforts on fundraising to replace this lost public revenue. If they want Canadians to donate to their party they will need to be more relevant to Canadians. That is what the opposition parties are afraid of, their irrelevancy.

If Canadians believe in a party and its policies, they will donate their hard-earned money to see that party elected and its initiatives implemented. That is the way it should be.

Our government is committed to strengthening integrity and accountability in government and political activity. Unlike the outrageous claims made by the opposition, this will not restrict political activity to the rich.

It is ironic that in one breath the opposition accuses our government of catering to the rich and then in the next breath proposes to raise the donation limit so that richer Canadians could donate more. It does not make any sense.

*[Translation]*

The average donation from our party supporters varies between \$150 and \$200, which means that currently, Canadians are giving well below the limit. What the opposition is saying is not true. In reality, Canadians donating these amounts are not rich. Supporters of the various political parties are what we could call average Canadians who want to help the political party of their choice. And having a choice is important to Canadians.

Governments have a duty to use taxpayer dollars wisely and only in the public interest, especially at a time of fiscal restraint when families are struggling to make ends meet.

The fact is that Canadian families are struggling right now. That is especially true when loved ones become sick and need help getting the necessary care. The new tax credit for caregivers will allow them to get back up to a maximum of \$2,000 of the approved expenses for taking care of infirm dependent relatives, including, for the first time, spouses, common law partners and minor children.

*[English]*

For those who have not experienced caring for loved ones with infirmities, it is difficult to imagine the pain and difficulty families can face from day to day. Over the years, I have been graced with the opportunity to meet with caregivers from across my riding. They are good people facing unexpected challenges, emotionally and financially, in order to provide for their loved ones. They play a vital role in supporting their loved ones, often elderly parents. They often must take time off from work, which further adds to their stress. Financial support is a critical component for them. Our commitment to the tax credit is a clear sign that our government understands the desire of Canadians to remain independent in their own homes for as long as possible.

At this time I would like to highlight a third element of our keeping Canada's economy and jobs growing act, which is the children's arts tax credit for programs associated with children's artistic, cultural, recreational and developmental activities.

As a father of five children, I am well aware of the cost, but also the benefits of giving children a solid foundation in the arts. My children have taken piano lessons, singing lessons and violin lessons. I have seen the arts help them to grow in confidence, self-discipline, creativity, and it has also been a form of recreation. I know that our family is not alone in this.

• (1255)

*[Translation]*

Thousands of parents in my riding understand the value of the arts to a child's development. Glengarry—Prescott—Russell is a riding that hosts a number of cultural events to celebrate its proud heritage, and the arts hold a very important place in those celebrations. Thousands of parents are already paying for lessons for their children even if that expense puts pressure on the family budget. We know that this type of tax credit works. We implemented the children's fitness tax credit in order to encourage children to remain active and it is working. Health experts keep telling us that children need to be physically active. They tell us we must encourage them to do so and that active video games are not enough. Our government is doing its part to offer more financial options to families in order to stimulate their children and ensure their development.

*[English]*

I spoke about this a lot during the May election and I mentioned it in the House in June, but I am proud to mention it again. Our government is committed to delivering a \$3,000 tax credit to volunteer firefighters.

Volunteer firefighters play a vital role in serving our communities. They put themselves at great risk for the safety of our neighbours. In a rural riding such as mine, volunteer firefighters are indispensable. I have met with these firefighters time and again, and they are overwhelmingly pleased by our government's commitment to this initiative. We said we would deliver strong financial support to recognize the critical work done by our volunteer firefighters and that is exactly what we are doing.

*[Translation]*

We want to thank Canadians for electing a majority government. Doing so allows us to implement legislative measures that will help all Canadians and will help the country weather the global economic storm.

*[English]*

**Mr. Paul Dewar (Ottawa Centre, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I listened carefully to the member's intervention. While there are many missing pieces in the government's plan, one is the growing gap between those who have and those who have less.



The government would say that it has brought in a low tax plan, but there is a problem, and this is very important for the member's riding where there is a lot of poverty. The plan does not help those who are on the margins. We see fewer and fewer people able to make ends meet and having an arts tax credit does not mean much.

Where is the plan from the government to actually deal with the wider prosperity gap in this country? Tax cuts do not cut it. We are seeing tax credits where people cannot afford music lessons.

What is the government doing about the poor, particularly urban poor, because there is a lot of poor in his riding?

**Mr. Pierre Lemieux:** Mr. Speaker, when we are addressing poverty, the best way to address it is to create jobs. People want to work. They want to have a job to raise their families and they do not want to have to rely on the government to do so.

As I mentioned, we announced 61,000 net new jobs that had been created in September. Our track record, since 2009, is the net creation of over 660,000 new jobs. This is putting Canadians to work, so that they can earn what they need to raise their families.

• (1308)

**Ms. Kirsty Duncan (Etobicoke North, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, yesterday I asked a minister about the need for a national nutrition program in Canada, so no child goes to school hungry. I was dismayed to receive talking points back on a completely different topic, albeit important, when 40% and 62% of elementary and secondary school students go to school hungry.

New data from the Toronto District School Board shows that the top benefits of a morning meal program are that it helps 86% of children who would not get the opportunity to eat. It improves student health by 74% and increases the intake of milk and dairy products by 71%. More powerful, 78% of grade 10 students who ate morning meals were on track for graduation compared to 61% who only ate a few days.

Does the member think that the government should be having discussions with the provinces and territories regarding a national nutrition program?

**Mr. Pierre Lemieux:** Mr. Speaker, my colleague does raise an important point that has to do with the nutrition of children and basically the raising of children. Certainly, as parliamentarians and as Canadians we want to ensure that our children have the best advantages in order to grow. But I would remind the member that as a parent of five children, and being in close contact with parents throughout my riding, parents want to feed their own children. They do not necessarily want the government feeding their children for them.

Therefore, it comes back again to creating jobs and lowering taxes. I already spoke about job creation. I would like to finish this response by underlining that through our Conservative government we have put in place tax cuts for families all across Canada, and the average saving for the average Canadian family due to our tax cuts since 2006 is \$3,000 per family. That is \$3,000 that parents can spend on raising their children, feeding their children and giving them every possible opportunity.

**Mr. Colin Carrie (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Health, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I am from Oshawa and just like the rest

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of the country, jobs are extremely important. I was wondering if the member could contrast our steady approach that relies on reducing taxes for businesses as opposed to the NDP's approach, which has been used in Greece and other countries that are in a lot of trouble right now. They are raising taxes and increasing spending. Could he contrast those two approaches on how they work for job creation?

**Mr. Pierre Lemieux:** Mr. Speaker, my colleague raises an excellent point and I could go on at length, but because of the time constraints I will say the following. Our measures to cut taxes for businesses are the right way to go because it leaves more money in the businesses themselves during these difficult economic times. If we want businesses to create jobs, we cannot suck money out of them through higher taxes and that is exactly what the NDP proposes. That is what the Liberals propose as well. We are on the side of job creation and job creation is what will help Canadians through these difficult economic times.

**Mr. Randall Garrison (Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I rise today to speak to Bill C-13, which is awkwardly titled keeping Canada's economy and jobs growing act.

I will focus my remarks on jobs. I want to first touch briefly on the general failure of the government and this bill in particular to address what is the most important challenge to this country and indeed to the world at this time, and that is climate change.

Whether it is the increased frequency and intensity of severe weather events, be that storms or flooding, whether it is the rapid shrinkage of the Arctic ice shelves, evidence of climate change is all around us.

The government seems not to understand that threat to our entire economy and indeed our way of life. In this bill we have a much more specific failure. We have a very specific threat here to cut our capacity to even understand and respond to climate change.

With the levels of reductions in expenditures by the government that are needed to reach its financial targets, the climate scientists at Environment Canada have been receiving layoff notices, the very people who might help us design a way out of this crisis and to limit the effects on our economy.

I do want to be alarmist on this issue because to state the obvious, ultimately there are no jobs on a dead planet.

Let me come back to the main topic that I want to talk about today, and that is the topic of jobs. Just like climate change, the warning signs are all around us here. We have instability in the international financial markets, the sovereign debt crisis in the eurozone, stagnant growth projections for Canada, all-time high levels of household debt, an increasing balance of payment deficits for this country, and low levels of private investment here at home.

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Low levels of corporate investment, despite a 43% tax cut for the big corporations, yet their business investment levels as a share of the GDP have not increased one iota despite those tax cuts.

What do we hear from the government? We hear a very familiar message. We hear, "Stay the course. Continue with corporate tax cuts. Continue to slash public expenditures".

When did we last hear this? We heard this in the election campaign of 2008 and we heard this from the new Conservative government after that election. The government continued on that path and only brought in its much discussed economic action plan after the threat of defeat in this House of Commons by its failure to act on the economic crisis at that time.

Here we are again, staring another recession in the face with a government that continues its plan of inaction rather than an action plan that would truly benefit Canadian families. I am afraid this time, because we have a majority government, we will continue down this path and leave Canadians at the mercy of these unstable markets.

Conservatives like to trumpet their record on job creation, but when we take into account labour force growth, the new jobs created fall 250,000 jobs short of what we would need just to keep employment levels steady in this country.

When we look at unemployed workers and discouraged workers, they amount to nearly two million in this country. When we look at youth unemployment rates, we have reached a high this summer of more than 17% of youth unemployed. The Conservative response was, "Well, let us continue to cut those corporate taxes."

As I said, there is no evidence, in fact the evidence is to the contrary, that these corporate tax cuts will do anything to create jobs.

Now the Conservatives, in this bill, are talking about a small business tax credit of \$1,000, but it is very clear that this is too small to have any major impact. The NDP has talked about a much larger credit available over a much larger period of time.

Rather than getting stuck in the details of this bill, I want to return to that question of broader economic policy, though these radical spending cuts that we are facing in the budget bill will only make the situation worse. On top of the direct hits these will cause for public services, it will mean a decline in jobs in our economy as economic growth is slowed by the cutting of public sector spending.

One of the things that we know is key to an economic recovery is demand. In order to have sufficient demand in our economy, employees need to earn a living wage. When they go to work every day, work hard, come to the end of the month, there has to be a little bit left over to spend. What we are finding, increasingly, that for families this is not the case.

In 1996 the Liberals eliminated the federal minimum wage and instead adopted the provincial wage rates. These rates have continually fallen behind inflation. Now in my own province of British Columbia, the minimum wage is \$8.75 an hour. When the social service agencies in Victoria got together and calculated what it takes in my community to actually earn enough to pay for basic food, clothing and shelter, and transportation to get to a job, the answer was \$18.03 an hour.

• (1305)

There is a gap of \$10 an hour here for families. When they get to the end of the month, it is no surprise that they are choosing between putting away a little for retirement, putting away a little for their kids' education and actually paying the bills that are coming due.

The major contributor to our economic crisis in the long term is inequality. This is a concern not just of New Democrats, but of business leaders in this country.

In September the Conference Board of Canada, not a noted left-wing organization, put out a report that discussed the increase in poverty rates in this country. After 10 years of some modest progress up to 2009, these rates began to increase once again, and that gap continues to grow.

The Conference Board of Canada pointed out that the gap between the rich and the poor in this country is now growing at a much faster rate than it is in the United States and that very soon we will catch up to them as among the developed countries with the largest gaps between the rich and the poor in the entire world.

Why are we having this increase in inequality? The Conference Board said it is a result of globalization and other market forces. When the government says market forces will fix the recession, it is also saying that market forces will fix inequality, and we have seen that simply is not true.

The Conference Board of Canada also points to dwindling unionization of the Canadian workforce and the stagnation of minimum wages as two key contributors, yet we have seen a constant attack from the government on trade unions as the representatives of workers in the attempt to get a living wage, a family-supporting wage and a wage that will actually promote economic growth and development in this country.

As a spokesperson for the NDP on the Asia-Pacific region, I have also spoken in the House about the lack of investment in this key area, an area in which we can make great progress. We should listen to the president of the Asia-Pacific Foundation, Yuen Pau Woo, who spoke at the Asia-Pacific conference sponsored by the B.C. council of business about two weeks ago in Vancouver. He said that yes, we have made some progress in exporting resources like forestry resources, and yes, the government has done some good work on infrastructure around the ports, but we are missing the boat when it comes to the key factor in expanding our trade with the Asia-Pacific region because we are failing to invest in human capacity.

He said that we need increasing investments in language training, cross-cultural communication and international business education, but there is nothing in the government's Asia-Pacific strategy that speaks to any of those fundamental needs that would help forge more ties with the Asia-Pacific region and help build the basis for strong trade in the future.



*Government Orders*

When it comes to equality, I read a book over the last year called *The Spirit Level: Why More Equal Societies Almost Always Do Better*, by Richard Wilkinson and Kate Pickett, two demographers who looked at the actual evidence. I know the government does not like evidence, but they looked in 11 areas of health and social services challenges, everything from physical health to mental health to child health to obesity to crime rates to violence. What they found was that in every case, a society that is more equal does better on every indicator.

Unexpectedly, it also shows that the rich in those countries also do better than the rich in the less equal countries, so this is not just a matter of benefiting the poor but a matter of benefiting all parts of our society by increasing equality.

I see nothing at all in the budget that would move us in that direction of more fundamental equality.

Despite a few crumbs and gestures toward small business and health care and a few non-refundable tax credits that will not help those really in need, there is nothing in the bill to promote jobs. There is nothing here to promote retirement security. There is no action to help the most vulnerable.

As we head into this Thanksgiving weekend, I wish all members of the House and all Canadians a happy Thanksgiving, but like others who have spoken today, I ask them to think about those less fortunate, those who will be going to food banks for their Thanksgiving dinner and those who are in even more dire situations: those who are homeless and who will be going to the soup kitchens for their Thanksgiving dinner.

I would much like to see the government take action that would decrease the inequalities in our society so that veterans, seniors and families with children do not end up in these dire situations on the next Thanksgiving.

• (1310)

**Mr. Colin Carrie (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Health, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I think everyone will be thinking about those less fortunate over Thanksgiving. The best thing we can do for people without jobs is give them jobs.

Today there was some great news. The unemployment rate in Canada went down to 7.1%. Over 61,000 new jobs were created, mostly full-time jobs. That is why the member's speech was so painful to listen to. He had the opportunity to give some really solid ideas about the economy that have worked internationally, but instead he chose to give an idealistic and alarmist rant.

He said one thing that was correct. He talked about the sovereign debt crisis in the eurozone, and it is a debt crisis. What is the NDP's solution? What did the NDP talk about today? It talked about the same solution as Greece: to tax more and spend more.

I would like the member to contrast the idealistic socialist approach that did not work in Europe with our low-tax job creation philosophy that has worked. We got more information today on how well it has worked.

Could he please contrast those? The proof is in the pudding. Could he let Canadians know why he keeps going on with this ideological rant instead of telling them the facts?

**Mr. Randall Garrison:** Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for his question because it gives me a chance to point out the fallacies in the Conservatives' argument that the proof is in the pudding.

If the proof is in the pudding, then the proof is in the two million Canadians who are unemployed or have given up looking for jobs. If the proof is in the pudding, it is in the growing poverty rates in this country. If the proof is in the pudding, the pudding is right in front of us, and we have only to take a close look at what is actually happening in our communities to see the growing inequality and the effects of it on our future prosperity.

To talk about where it has worked, again I point to *The Spirit Level* and to other economists who have pointed out that the long-term way to prosperity is through equality and through public investments in infrastructure that will help our economy grow in the future.

• (1315)

**Mr. Mathieu Ravignat (Pontiac, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to take this opportunity to offer my best Thanksgiving wishes to my colleagues and constituents.

I want to come back to something asked by the last questioner. Essentially he was blaming the problems in Europe on social democratic governments.

I would like my colleague to tell me what is at the root of the problems, both in Europe and in the U.S. Is it social democratic principles, or is it unbridled capitalism?

**Mr. Randall Garrison:** Mr. Speaker, what is clear is that the crisis we entered into in 2008 was sparked by corporate greed and unregulated corporate profits.

New Democrats are pointing to figures in Canada that show that giving a 43% tax cut to big corporations has done nothing to bring private investment into our economy that would create jobs and growth in the future, so we have essentially thrown away that revenue and borrowed money to subsidize major corporations when we could have kept the tax rates where they were.

That is where the Conservatives are a bit disingenuous: in saying New Democrats want an increase. We were actually just talking about stopping the decrease in corporate taxes in this country. In fact, when we had the highest rates of growth in this country, we also had high corporate tax rates.

**Mr. Philip Toone (Gaspésie—Îles-de-la-Madeleine, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his insightful views on what is going on in Europe.

If we look at unemployment figures in this country, we are looking at an unemployment rate that is much higher than what was cited in the House today. A number of people are underemployed and a number have given up looking for employment, and in fact the unemployment rate at this point is well over 11%. Over one in ten persons in Canada is either unemployed or underemployed. That is pretty high.

New Democrats have a proposal for some tax credits for creating employment. I would like my colleague to further elaborate on tax credits that would actually create employment in this country.

*Government Orders*

**Mr. Randall Garrison:** Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for his question and I would like others to speak on that aspect later.

I would like to come back to his point that there are more than two million people who are unemployed or underemployed. In addition to that, a very large sector of our workforce is working at minimum wage. As I stressed in my speech, working at minimum wage in this country means that people do not earn enough to pay for the basic necessities of food, clothing and shelter, and they do not earn enough to put away money for their kids' education or for retirement. If the Conservative government's inaction continues on the question of inequality, low wages and unemployment, we are actually mortgaging our future.

I would ask the government to take an approach that will provide real job creation and a real attack on the inequalities in this country.

**Mrs. Susan Truppe (Parliamentary Secretary for Status of Women, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure to rise in the House today to speak in support of our government's low-tax plan for jobs and growth, the next phase of Canada's economic action plan.

On May 2 Canadians voted for continued economic growth and stability. Our Conservative government has continued to deliver for Canadians, with a strong, stable and ever-growing economy.

The members opposite believe that raising taxes on Canadians and small businesses is the right thing to do. This is simply not the route to continued prosperity. Tax cuts, not tax hikes, create jobs.

How effective is our government's tax-cutting plan for Canadians?

Our Conservative government believes in low taxes and in leaving more money where it belongs: in the pockets of hard-working Canadian families and job-creating businesses. The opposition's high-tax agenda would increase taxes on job-creating businesses to pay for billions of dollars in reckless spending and bloated government programs in Ottawa. The opposition's high-tax plan would kill jobs, stall our fragile economic recovery, and set families back.

Since 2006 our Conservative government has cut taxes over 120 times, reducing the overall tax burden to its lowest level in nearly 50 years.

It is a shame that the members opposite do not believe that a typical family saving over \$3,000 due to our government's tax-cutting plan should be entitled to that. It is a shame that the members opposite show disregard to the arts community by opposing the children's arts tax credit, a tax credit that would deliver up to \$500 for parents across the country who enrol their children in arts, cultural, recreational and developmental activities. It is a shame that the members opposite do not believe that Canadians should be entitled to our government's new family caregiver tax credit. This credit would provide \$2,000 for caregivers of all types of infirm dependent relatives, including, for the first time, spouses, common-law partners and minor children.

Finally, it is a shame that the members opposite do not believe that small businesses should be given the necessary tools to be successful in this country of ours.

In this budget, our government provides a new hiring credit for small businesses. I know there are a lot of small businesses in my riding that are pleased about this.

I heard the comments from the member for London—Fanshawe, who painted a bleak, negative picture of our great city of London. Perhaps she would like to explain to the small businesses in our city why she opposes a \$1,000 one-time credit against the increase in their 2011 EI premiums over those paid in 2010.

I, for one, am proud to be a member of Parliament from the great city of London, Ontario, and I am proud to support our small businesses, because tax cuts create jobs.

As I just mentioned, the member opposite from London—Fanshawe decided to paint a bleak picture of our great city. As a proud Londoner, I would like to highlight to this House why we should all be proud of our city.

First, the member opposite claimed that London has the highest unemployment rate in Canada. The hon. member is factually wrong. We do not. According to last month's labour force survey from Statistics Canada, London's unemployment rate actually dropped in the month of August.

Further, today Statistics Canada indicated that the economy created 61,000 new jobs across the country in September, with the unemployment rate dropping to its lowest level in nearly three years. Ensuring my constituents and all Londoners can find employment is certainly a priority of mine and of our government. That is why I was pleased to participate in August, via teleconference, in a job summit hosted by the mayor of our city of London, a job summit that the NDP member for London—Fanshawe did not attend.

This summit brought together political representatives from all three levels of government, businesses and other stakeholders from across this city to discuss how, together, we can strengthen economic growth in our city. If the member for London—Fanshawe had decided to attend, she would know that the answer was resounding. We must work together to create more jobs and strengthen economic growth in our city.

This budget would do exactly that.

The member opposite stated that she is worried that Londoners would get the short end of the stick with our government's investment in the Ontario federal development agency. I am happy to report that the member opposite has nothing to worry about at all, and I will explain why. Instead of speaking negatively about our city and its hard-working residents, our government has been hard at work to provide the necessary tools to strengthen our economy and create jobs.



● (1320)

Since being elected to represent my constituents of London North Centre on May 2, I have been pleased to deliver over \$7 million in investments to businesses and organizations in my riding through Federal Development Ontario and millions more through other departments.

It is a shame that the member for London—Fanshawe failed to mention that the London Economic Development Corporation reports that 1,451 new jobs have been created in the city of London thus far in 2011. These new jobs mean \$163.3 million for the local economy.

It is a shame that the member for London—Fanshawe failed to mention the millions of dollars in investment our government has made in the University of Western Ontario, located in my riding of London North Centre.

What do these investments mean for businesses and institutions in our city? Ted Hewitt, the vice-president of research at the University of Western Ontario, had this to say:

By providing researchers with the tools they need to develop innovative ideas, treatments and technologies that benefit us at home, we are able to continue to enhance the country's research reputation on the global stage

There is more.

Our government has supported the arts by investing in festivals, such as the TD Sunfest, one of the largest music festivals in Canada that takes place in the heart of the city of London. Our government has invested in the seniors and disabled in my riding of London North Centre and all Londoners by investing \$3.2 million in the centretown project. This initiative will create jobs for Londoners and offer 72 affordable housing units for low-income seniors and the disabled.

Also, our government supported job creation for youth in my riding by investing in nearly \$30,000 in Youth Opportunities Unlimited, an organization in my riding that offers top-notch training to youth.

Londoners are hard at work in almost every aspect of the everyday life of Canadians and those abroad.

Canada's military is equipped with quality light armoured vehicles, thanks to the employees of London's General Dynamics. It is worth noting that, in 2010, our government invested \$34.4 million into the LAV III upgrade project at General Dynamics.

Balanced breakfasts are brought to families across Canada by Kellogg Canada located in London.

Synergy Manufacturing, a small business in my riding that manufactures specialty windows for homes, has doubled its employment numbers, thanks to our government's economic action plan.

One hundred thousand pounds of honey are produced by McCormick Canada located in London, Ontario.

The hundreds of Londoners working at Labatt Brewing Company in my riding of London North Centre produce 1,029 bottles/cans of beer every minute.

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New York city will have 2.5 billion gallons of safe, clean water thanks to London's Trojan Technologies.

Employees of London's Brose Canada ensures one in three cars are safer and more efficient.

There are 2,000 tonnes of CO2 that will not be in the air that we breathe tomorrow, thanks to the 100 new jobs created for Londoners at the London Plant of KACO New Energy.

For two million Canadians, retirement is secure due to the efforts of Freedom 55 Financial, an insurance company located again in the heart of London.

Millions are traded on the New York Stock Exchange, thanks, in part, to the design team at London's Cyborg Trading Systems. There is a number one best selling app for that created by designers at London's Big Blue Bubble Inc.

Those are just some of the examples that the hard-working Londoners put in for us.

Actions, not empty rhetoric, are why Canadians have sent us to this House. Since 2006, our government has put on its hard hat, steel-toed boots and have built a strong foundation for Canada's future. The members opposite, however, choose empty rhetoric over economic growth, empty rhetoric over helping seniors and empty rhetoric over helping families and job creation.

Our government chooses to stand up and deliver for seniors, for small business and for students. Our government chooses to stand up and deliver for the volunteer firefighters. Finally, our government chooses to stand up and deliver for Londoners and all Canadians.

I am pleased to support Bill C-13, a budget that delivers for my constituents and all Canadians. I am proud to be a member of Parliament from a city that is truly second to none. I am proud to be a member of Parliament from the greatest city in the greatest country in the world, London, Ontario.

● (1325)

**Ms. Linda Duncan (Edmonton—Strathcona, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, it is great to hear that the government's policies are helping the riding of the member across the way, but I would appreciate a little more detail on these newly created jobs that the members opposite have been bragging about.

I wonder if she could provide a little more detail on exactly how the budget has created those jobs. Could she advise us on the regional breakdown of those new jobs? How many involve temporary foreign workers? How many of those jobs are in aboriginal communities? How many of those jobs are for the High Arctic?

**Mrs. Susan Truppe:** Mr. Speaker, today, Statistics Canada announced that 60,000 net new jobs were created in September, that is all across Canada, not just in the riding of London North Centre. The unemployment rate declined to 7.1%, the lowest level of unemployment since December 2008. Indeed, this week *Forbes* magazine ranked Canada as the best place in the world for businesses to grow and create jobs.

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While Canada's economy has now created nearly 650,000 net new jobs since 2009, there are a lot of Canadians still looking for work and our global recovery remains fragile, especially in the United States and Europe, and Canada is not immune to global economic turbulence. That is why we are working hard in Parliament to implement the next phase of Canada's economic action plan and its job creating measures, like hiring credits for small businesses.

• (1330)

**Mr. Marc Garneau (Westmount—Ville-Marie, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, in her presentation, the hon. member mentioned that the opposition parties were against the tax credits. I want to let her know that we are in favour of the tax credits that are in the budget. That is a good move.

However, why does the government not consider it a good idea to make those refundable tax credits so that the people who are in the lower incomes will be able to take advantage of them? I know the government wants to be fair to all Canadians. It would like the children of poor people to be able to take arts courses. It would like low-income volunteer firefighters to also be able to benefit from the tax credit. It would not cost that much more to make it a refundable tax credit.

I would like to hear her ideas on this, what I think, is a useful suggestion.

**Mrs. Susan Truppe:** Mr. Speaker, I thank the member opposite for supporting keeping taxes low.

In regard to keeping taxes low, we have cut taxes over 120 times since 2006, reducing the overall tax burden to its lowest level in nearly 50 years. We have removed over one million low-income families, individuals and seniors from the tax roll altogether. We have cut taxes in every way government collects them. We have cut personal taxes, consumption taxes, business taxes, excise taxes and much more. This includes cutting the lowest personal income-tax rate to 15%, increasing the amount Canadians can earn tax free, providing seniors with pension income splitting and reducing the GST from 7% to 5%, putting nearly \$1,000 back in the pocket of an average family.

**Mr. Joe Preston (Elgin—Middlesex—London, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I congratulate the Parliamentary Secretary for Status of Women and my colleague from the city of London on an excellent speech pointing out the good things about London and how it got there.

We continue to hear from the other side about what a rotten place we seem to live. I was reminded by a piece of fan mail from someone, not even from my riding, after my speech saying, "Good! Tell them, Joe. Tell them that we live in the best country on the face of this earth".

I would like to ask the parliamentary secretary why she thinks that happens in this place.

**Mrs. Susan Truppe:** Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague from London, Joe Preston from Elgin—Middlesex—London—

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bruce Stanton):** Order, please. We know the sentiment is there but members are just reminded not to mention hon. members by their names but rather their riding names.

**Mrs. Susan Truppe:** Mr. Speaker, the facts show that there are positive signs for Canada's economy. We are not immune to the problems facing the global economy, problems chiefly caused by out of control debt and reckless spending.

While our government has a plan to create jobs and grow Canada's economy through low taxes, training and increased trade, the NDP's medicine for Canada's economy is the same reckless spending and out of control debt that has affected the global economy.

**Mr. Ted Hsu (Kingston and the Islands, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the remarks by my hon. colleague across the floor would lead me to begin my speech a bit differently because his remarks reminded me why I am here. I am here because I live in the best country in the world, a country that is worth serving, a country in which it is worth perfecting legislation as best we can and a country where it is worth looking at the details of the legislation and answering detailed questions on that legislation. That is what living in the best country in the world means.

I will begin by first acknowledging my family, my wife, Tara, and my daughters, Ella-Valentine and Vera-Claire. I work here in Ottawa but my life is back home in Kingston and the Islands. I want to acknowledge them here today. This is actually the first time I have stood to give a formal speech and I wanted them to know they are the centre of my life, even though my work is here in Ottawa and at my constituency office in Kingston and the Islands.

When I think about my family, this bill reminds me of filing income tax. It is a privilege and honour to stand here and realize that the things we are talking about in the chamber today are the things that will be on everyone's income tax return next year. It is amazing. It makes me think about why the income tax form is the way it is and what we decide in this chamber will determine what our income tax forms will look like next year.

That brings me to one of the main problems with the budget. As my colleague from Westmount—Ville-Marie mentioned, a lot of the good ideas for tax credits would only be available to people who have extra taxable income left at the end of their tax form in order to claim the non-refundable tax credits.

The government members have not been able to answer the question posed several times, once in question period and on several other occasions by my hon. colleague from Westmount—Ville-Marie. It would not cost a lot more to make the tax credits refundable so that they are available to people who do not have the incomes to afford these credits.



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I think we will all be looking at the economy over the next year or two. This country is like a ship on the ocean and we see some storms on the horizon. The other side of the House is now in charge of the ship. The captain is on the other side of the House. He has responsibility for taking care of all the people on the ship. His officers are telling him that there is a storm on the horizon and that it is his duty to protect all of the people on the ship. Some of the people are on the deck, the ship is starting to sway and they are holding onto the rails. Others are sitting comfortably in their cabins. The captain should be thinking about the people on the margins. When it comes time to protect Canadians from the perilous economic situation, from the storms that we see on the horizon, in Europe especially, we should be giving preference to the poor and their situation and try to figure out how to protect them first because they will be the first people to feel the brunt of this economic storm.

I do not know if the government realizes this, but I remember that in 2008, when the markets first started collapsing and it was clear to many people that the global economy was in trouble, the government took a bit of time to recognize that danger.

● (1335)

Therefore, it would be a good idea for the government to reconsider that part of the budget, to make these tax credits refundable in order to protect the most vulnerable members of our society, the ones who are clinging to the rails on the deck of the ship as it is swaying back and forth as the storm brews. The captain has a duty to protect all of the people on the ship.

One example of that which really strikes me, and it does not make sense at all, is the family caregiver tax credit. A lot of us have heard of situations where people have to quit their jobs to take care of loved ones at home who are seriously ill, so their incomes go down. It is very easy to imagine that in this situation they would not have sufficient income to have taxable income left at the end of their tax forms to be able to claim the family caregiver tax credit. It would have been a much better idea to have extended the employment insurance program to provide for longer benefits in the case where someone had to take an extended time off to take care of a seriously ill family member.

The next thing I would like to do is to think about numbers. I would like to talk about the hiring credit for small business and the scheduled increase in employment insurance payroll taxes. If we look at the numbers, for most small businesses, the EI payroll tax increase will swamp the hiring tax credit for small businesses. This does not make sense, especially when we know there is another tax cut coming for larger corporations at the beginning of next year. It strikes me that there is not a very coherent strategy here.

I know what is going to come from the other side. The Conservatives are going to talk about the announcement by Stats Canada of the 61,000 jobs that were created in September. I know about that, so they can save their time. They do not need to mention it in the next question. We have to think about a coherent strategy.

While I am on this, I will just take the opportunity to mention something that is a little different, but it is a concern that has been brought up by constituents in my riding and it is very appropriate to mention it at this time.

In the past, Canada has had quite a good program for funding capital costs of research and development. There is something called the Canada Foundation for Innovation. It has been quite good at funding big projects and little projects and new researchers going to universities, giving them the money to buy the equipment they need to start up their laboratories, to start up a research group and to have the equipment they need to be world-leading researchers. However, it turns out, as a good rule of thumb, that for every dollar that is spent on capital improvements about 10¢ a year is needed to utilize and maintain that equipment.

For example, for a university researcher that would mean funding for graduate students, for post-docs and for technicians to maintain and run the equipment. Big projects have had these problems recognized, but for small scale research and development, the funding streams from the granting councils, such as NSERC, for operational funds, which is needed to really take full advantage of all the capital expenditures, has not kept up with the great funding for infrastructure and capital expenditures. Therefore, I would request that the government consider, perhaps in the committee stage, adjusting the funding so the money set aside for our granting councils, and other councils that can give operating funds, be unrestricted funding to be consistent with the great level of funding that we have for capital expenditures in small scale research and development.

● (1340)

I will end with that. I have not spoken about the whole budget bill, nobody can, but these are some areas that I think are important.

**Ms. Lois Brown (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of International Cooperation, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, for the record, so we are sure we have heard the number, more than 650,000 net new jobs have been created by this government and our economic action plan.

My hon. colleague from Kingston and the Islands is already talking about his next year's income tax form, so I am sure he is concerned with what that is going to look like.

As the Minister of Human Resources and Skills Development said this morning, we have taken nearly a million people off the income tax rolls already. We did that because we wanted to assist the people who were the most vulnerable in our society, to ensure that they had their own money in their pockets to spend. We have lowered the GST by 2%, which is a tax credit for everyone when they go shopping for consumerable items.

Since the hon. member is looking at his own income tax, how much more income tax is he willing to pay so we can help more people?

● (1345)

**Mr. Ted Hsu:** Mr. Speaker, let me answer the question in this way. Sometimes people ask me why I am a Liberal. The simplest answer I can give is I have been pretty successful in life. Fifty per cent of that is hard work and some of that hard work is other people's hard work. The other 50% is luck. A lot of that 50% of luck is having grown up in Canada.

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As a Liberal, I feel it is very appropriate for me, as part of a society that has given so much to me, to work, to give back and to ensure that everybody in this society has equal opportunity. That is how I would answer that question. I am willing to pay taxes to ensure this is the best country in the world.

**Mr. Jasbir Sandhu (Surrey North, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, we know the record of the Conservatives. They have had the largest deficit ever recorded in our history. That is their financial record.

I want to ask my colleague a question. We know there is nothing in this budget for small businesses. We have big corporate tax cuts, yet the engine that drives this economy are the small businesses.

Now the government will be adding a new payroll tax on small businesses, on workers, starting in January. That is called a tax.

There were \$54 billion in the EI fund. Where did that money go?

**Mr. Ted Hsu:** Mr. Speaker, that is a good question. I have to confess, because I do not want to say anything that is not true in the House, that I do not have an answer to the question. I would be very happy to answer it at another time.

**Hon. Michael Chong (Wellington—Halton Hills, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I would be happy to answer the question on behalf of the member opposite. The fact is that money went into the consolidated revenue fund, which the then Liberal government used to fund programs and balance its budget.

Our government has introduced rules to ensure that premiums paid into the Canada pension plan eventually go into a separate fund and that there is an independent arm's-length oversight of that pension plan—sorry of the employment insurance fund to ensure that the premiums match the payouts. That is what we have done to ensure this situation never happens again.

**Mr. Ted Hsu:** Mr. Speaker, I thought I heard “Canada pension plan”. I wonder if the hon. member meant to say employment insurance.

**Hon. John Duncan:** He corrected himself.

**Mr. Paul Calandra:** Liberals just do not listen.

**Mr. Ted Hsu:** Mr. Speaker, I did listen.

I am not an expert on the expected payouts that will come from the employment insurance program. I do not have anything intelligent to add to the comment from across the floor.

**Mr. Pierre Poilievre (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Transport, Infrastructure and Communities and for the Federal Economic Development Agency for Southern Ontario, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, as I begin, I note that the previous speaker from the Liberal side stated that he was happy to continue to pay taxes in order to live in the best country in the world. He provoked enthusiastic applause from his opposition colleagues, which indicates to Canadians that those members on the other side believe that what makes our country the best in the world is taxes.

We understand that it is not taxation, but the hard work of workers, small businesses, entrepreneurs and the Canadian people who make us the best country in the world.

Those members have illustrated the clear difference between the two sides of the House of Commons. I dedicate part of this speech to

those on the other side who believe, for example, that the solution to the debt crisis in Europe is to have more debt in Canada, who think we can create jobs by taxing those who hire and who say that the individual cannot be trusted with his own money, but a collection of individuals can be trusted with the money of others.

Those people on the other side say that the individual is too flawed to make his or her own decisions, but that those same flawed individuals, when they combine their flaws in the collective, can make decisions for everyone else.

We on this side understand that it is the basic tenets of freedom, as laid out, for example, in the Bill of Rights of the Right Hon. Prime Minister Diefenbaker. Those freedoms are what make Canada great: freedom of speech; freedom of religion; freedom of association; and also freedom of enterprise and freedom of trade.

On the subject of trade, I will just share a bit of an excerpt from one of the finest economists of the last century, Milton Friedman. He says:

Look at this...pencil, there is not a single person in the world who could make this pencil. Remarkable statement? Not at all. The wood from which it's made, for all I know, comes from a tree that was cut down in the State of Washington. To cut down that tree, it took a saw. To make the saw, it took steel. To make the steel, it took iron ore.

This black center, we call it lead but it's really compressed graphite, I am not sure where it comes from but I think it comes from some mines in South America. This red top up here, the eraser, a bit of rubber, probably comes from Malaya, where the rubber tree isn't even native. It was imported from South America by some businessman with the help of the British government. This brass feral - I haven't the slightest idea where it came from or the yellow paint or the paint that made the black lines - or the glue that holds it together.

Literally thousands of people cooperated to make this pencil. People who don't speak the same language; who practice different religions; who might hate one another if they ever met. When you go down to the store and buy this pencil, you are, in effect, trading a few minutes of your time for a few seconds of the time of all of those thousands of people. What brought them together and induced them to cooperate to make this pencil? There was no Commissar sending out orders from some central office. It was the magic of the price system - the impersonal operation of prices that brought them together and got them to cooperate to make this pencil so that you could have it for a trifling sum.

That is why the operation of the free market is so essential. Not only to promote productive efficiency, but even more, to foster harmony and peace among the peoples of the world.

That is where we disagree with our opposition colleagues, who believe that they can control the economy from the centre. They can issue dictates out to people far and wide, tell them how to run their lives and how to run their family budgets.

Our government on this side has expanded on that international enterprise by bringing in free trade agreements with Panama, Jordan, Colombia, Peru, Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway, Switzerland. We are working a trade agreement with the largest market in the world, the European Union. The second most populous country on earth, India. This will allow us to expand the prosperity, creating new markets for our businesses and new products available to our consumers at lower prices, all of these measures opposed by our official opposition, which would build a wall around Canada's system of enterprise.



*Government Orders*

● (1350)

This is an opposition that speaks often about the pensions of, for example, unionized workers. I give it credit because we should all be concerned with that subject. Defined benefit pension plans are under pressure. What to do? Some say to scale back the entitlements and others say to increase the employer contribution. Neither of these options are very favourable, but there is a third option, and that is to lower business taxes. Virtually every defined benefit plan in the country owns shares in the country's largest and most profitable enterprises. If these businesses make good after tax money, they can pay better dividends to the pension funds that own their shares.

Take the Canada Post pension plan for postal workers. During the recent debate over their strike, members of the NDP simultaneously demanded that the existing pension plan be bolstered while proposing to increase business taxes on the holdings in that very same pension fund. The irony of the two demands is as follows. The top five holdings of the Canada Post pension plan are: the Toronto-Dominion Bank, Royal Bank of Canada, Bank of Nova Scotia, Suncor and Canadian natural resources. They are banks and oil companies, the twin villains in every left-wing storyline.

These are the same enterprises that pay dividends directly to the unionized workers who deliver our mail through Canada Post. These dividends come from after tax profits. If the business tax rises, the after tax profit remaining in the pension fund drops. The Canada Post fund has \$202 million invested in the Toronto-Dominion Bank, roughly. As of a couple of weeks ago when I checked, that was the market value of those holdings. When TD profits, it reinvests the money in the growth of the company or it pays dividends to the shareholders. Either way, the pension funds and the pensioners, therefore, benefit.

When we lower taxes for entrepreneurs and businesses, large and small, the beneficiaries in many instances are pensioners, people who are part of defined benefit plans. Businesses are comprised of people. That is something the official opposition refuses to acknowledge. They are employees, shareholders and consumers.

When the NDP proposes to raise taxes on those businesses, it must choose on whom it would raise those taxes, the shareholders, like pensioners, the consumers through higher prices, or the workers through cut wages or lost jobs, because one of those three consequences or a combination of them will surely result when taxes are increased on the nation's enterprises.

The reason why *Forbes* magazine recently said Canada is the best place to do business is because we are removing the obstacles to success in overregulation and overtaxation, so that enterprises can hire and create more opportunity for Canadians.

The old utopian dream was for workers to become owners of the means of production through a process of forced collectivization. In an ironic twist of fate, it was the capitalistic stock market and not the state that transformed workers into business owners. It was inventions like the RRSP and now the tax free savings account or defined benefit pension plans which hold equities that have allowed everyday blue collar workers, who only a half century ago would have never considered share ownership to even be a distant dream, to now become owners of businesses.

The workers are the owners because in this system of free enterprise that has made our country so strong and made us succeed so vastly, even in this difficult economic time, we have unleashed the ability of workers to achieve the maximum opportunity for themselves and their families, to lift themselves up and succeed in this country.

In order for us to hold these beliefs and realize these successes, we must continue to have faith in Canadians who work hard every day to provide for their families, to share the blessings of this land with their neighbours and loved ones, and to do so without the shackles of the government holding them down and blocking their success.

I am very proud that the people of Nepean—Carleton elected me to carry on this great Canadian tradition of free enterprise and free trade.

● (1355)

**Mr. Jamie Nicholls (Vaudreuil—Soulanges, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, while the member opposite talks about pencils, we over here in the NDP are actually in the digital economy. I do not see many people using pencils any more.

Friedrich Hayek, Milton Friedman? This out of touch government is stuck in the 20th century. The World Economic Forum, during the tenure of the government, has ranked Canada's competitiveness. It went from 6th to 9th to 12th. Why is the government content with being number 12? Why does the government not want to be the number one most competitive economy in the world? Why does it not want to do that? Why will it not act to become the most competitive economy in the world?

**Mr. Pierre Poilievre:** Mr. Speaker, let me state the obvious. Canada is number one. We are the best country in the world.

I know that the hon. member did not like me mentioning the pencil. He was swinging his fists around. He should know that the pen is more powerful than the sword. However, the reality is that the principles I illustrated with the simplicity of a pencil, so that the member could understand them, would apply in the assembly of this BlackBerry. Everything requires that there is an intermingling of interests and productivity from around the world, that every time we build a border to block it, we lose that.

● (1400)

[Translation]

**Hon. Denis Coderre (Bourassa, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order.

I have no problem with entertainment. Today is Friday and our work is practically finished here. However, we have rules in this House and I feel that too many props are being used. The member should put down his pencil and BlackBerry. We need to be serious here. He can speak without showing these items. There are numerous examples demonstrating that we cannot do this type of thing in the House.

*Government Orders**[English]*

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bruce Stanton):** Yes, of course, members will know that props, other than documents that members can refer to from time to time, indeed are things that are not permitted for display purposes in the House of Commons.

**Mr. Pierre Poilievre:** Mr. Speaker, I know that I was using a pencil to gesticulate earlier on and one member said that is too out of date; another said that it is too distracting. I will try my best not to use any physical props in order to make my points. But I hope that the weight of these arguments and the success of their implementation over many years, in fact centuries, will be self-evident enough for the hon. members across to understand how the economy works.

**Mr. Marc Garneau (Westmount—Ville-Marie, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member for his comments. I always find him extremely entertaining. I have been asking the different members on the government side the same question. So, let me ask that question of him.

The government's tax credits contained in its budget implementation plan are a good idea. However, in the interest of fairness for those who are of low income, I would like to have his personal opinion on whether or not he thinks it is a reasonable proposition, and it will not cost that much, to make those non-refundable tax credits, and he knows the categories I am talking about, refundable so that we are not actually discriminating against low income Canadians.

**Mr. Pierre Poilievre:** Mr. Speaker, certainly, we will consider any good ideas that come our way. However, keep in mind these are tax credits that were implemented by this government because we believe in lowering taxes and leaving money in the pockets of the people who earn it. We will continue to advance that point of view because we have faith in the hard work, the ingenuity and the industriousness of every Canadian.

**Mr. Dean Del Mastro (Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister and to the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I really enjoyed listening to the hon. member speak because I think he speaks with such passion and conviction. All members in this House would have to agree this member has a great grasp on fundamental economics and the drivers of an economy.

I have watched some of the NDP members covering their ears and trying to look away when the hon. member was speaking because they knew that he was speaking the absolute truth.

However, could the member please provide for this House a single example of a country that is a high tax jurisdiction, that is in a high regulatory environment, which is anywhere close to Canada in job creation or economic growth?

**Mr. Pierre Poilievre:** No, Mr. Speaker, I cannot.

*[Translation]*

**Ms. Lysane Blanchette-Lamothe (Pierrefonds—Dollard, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, we are here today to debate a bill to keep Canada's economy and jobs growing. I would like to express my doubts about the effectiveness of such legislative measures, which I feel do very little to encourage economic and job growth.

Yet last week, this same government voted in favour of an opposition motion. The government committed to taking immediate action to create jobs and deal with unemployment. It also committed to taking immediate action so that Canadians can count on guaranteed pension benefits. Unfortunately, we are not seeing these things, and there is every reason to be disappointed with Bill C-13, which is before us today.

I am not at all convinced that this measure will stimulate job creation, improve health care, guarantee a stable retirement for all or tackle poverty among seniors. The hon. member across the way recently spoke of the magic of the free market, but this magic unfortunately does not benefit everyone. Bill C-13 overlooks far too many people who are in need of help from the Government of Canada right now.

We are told that our GDP is fine and that our economic situation is much better than that of many other countries. I do not wish to argue that here today, but even if that is true, we cannot be lulled into thinking—as one easily could be—that if our economy is doing fine, this has a positive impact on all Canadians. That is false. The magic of the free market does not include a magic wand that can be waved for the benefit of all Canadians. In fact, the middle class is shrinking and the gap between the rich and the poor is increasing. Just because the economy is doing alright, that does not mean that everyone benefits. Bill C-13 unfortunately seems to ignore that fact and does nothing to protect those who need any particular support.

I can give examples of measures that will not benefit everyone. For instance, consider the measure to eliminate the \$10,000 limit on eligible expenses caregivers can claim under the medical expense tax credit in respect of dependent relatives. It has been mentioned several times today, but I would like to ask once more: do my colleagues across the floor truly believe that the hundreds of thousands of Canadians who are unemployed or living below the poverty line are really going to care about the elimination of a \$10,000 limit on expenses that can be claimed for tax credits? I do not think so.

I doubt that the 1.4 million Canadians who are “officially” unemployed will jump for joy at the idea of a \$10,000 limit on medical expenses being eliminated when a great deal of money—\$11.5 billion—could be invested in other measures besides medical tax credits. It could be invested in getting people back to work, in updating people's professional skills and in retraining. In our recent motion, we also proposed concrete measures such as strategic investments in infrastructure, targeted tax relief for job creation and untargted tax cuts for banks and large oil companies.



I do not want anyone to misinterpret what I am saying. I do not mean that this measure in particular is a bad thing. Of course, any help is a good thing. What I find unacceptable is the fact that there is nothing for those who need it most. The proportion of part-time workers who are looking for full-time work has increased very rapidly. The Conservatives brag about the number of jobs that have been created but they do not talk about the quality of those jobs or about the number of people who are still looking for quality, full-time employment. Jobs that truly allow families to make a living are very hard to find in many regions of the country. The actual unemployment rate, which includes discouraged workers who have withdrawn from the labour force and part-time workers who would like to be working full-time was 11.1% in July 2011. It was 9.4% in 2008.

• (1405)

The Conservatives therefore cannot stand idly by patting themselves on the back and telling themselves that they have done all they can and everything is going well. There is still much to be done, yet very little has been proposed today.

These statistics do not show the exorbitant unemployment rate among youth. In 2008, 2.6 million Canadians aged 15 to 24 had a job. Today, only 2.4 million of them are employed. We are therefore seeing another drop here. It is time to seriously tackle unemployment, and I am afraid that there are not enough concrete measures here to truly deal with the problem.

If we consider that 85,000 young people have entered the labour market since 2008, we quickly see that it is not only our seniors who have money problems; our young people do too. Does the government plan to one day give these people some help, which they are entitled to expect from their government?

Tax credits like the ones proposed by the government are generally useless for part-time workers, the unemployed and seniors who live in poverty—basically, for anyone who tries, and fails, to make ends meet every month. These Canadians do not have enough money to spend to have access to these credits and do not pay enough taxes to qualify. However, they are the ones who need the most help right now.

I have a particular interest in seniors, and I would like to take some time to talk about what this bill fails to address. I would like to share my disappointment at the almost complete lack of measures to help our seniors living in poverty. There is nothing in Bill C-13, or virtually nothing. What we see is nothing but smoke and mirrors. Nothing addresses seniors' issues. Most Canadian seniors will not benefit from the measures set out in Bill C-13. Statistics clearly show that a very large number of seniors—not to mention single parents and people who earn minimum wage—live below the poverty line, and two-thirds of these people are women.

In fact, 11 million Canadians do not have an employer-sponsored pension plan, and approximately 250,000 seniors live in poverty. However, last June, the government agreed to address seniors' poverty. What measures did they propose? We saw measures to provide a supplement of approximately \$1 a day for seniors living in poverty. Are these the kinds of measures that the government is proposing to truly help poor seniors? I am afraid so, and I also fear that this government believes the file is closed, because there is

nothing more in the documents indicating that our seniors' situation will improve.

What is the government proposing to do to address seniors' poverty? I will say it once again: nothing. Today, there is nothing. Once again, I disagree with my colleagues in government. My consultations with seniors' groups, community organizations that provide services to seniors, and workers on the front lines of health care have convinced me that our seniors need affordable and adapted housing, investments in gerontology, investments in home care and services, and investments in a drug plan. I repeat, I am not at all convinced that they need a bill that includes the removal of a \$10,000 ceiling for eligible expenses.

Before closing, I would also like to mention my disappointment that the Conservatives want to limit debate on this bill.

I will wait for questions to make further comments.

• (1410)

[English]

**Mr. Dean Del Mastro (Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister and to the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, this week we had a number of very encouraging reports on the economy.

First we had the economic growth numbers for Canada, which are up 0.3% in a single month. That is 3.6% annualized growth. It is certainly very strong.

Today new job numbers are out, showing 60,000 net new full-time jobs created in this country. By any measure, that outpaces any of our competitors. The United States, which is ten times our size, created just a few more jobs than we did in total. That demonstrates how well Canada is doing.

There is still more improvement to make, but 7.1% unemployment is certainly much lower than Canada's 30-year average, and we are amid a global economic crisis. I think that Canada is certainly doing well. *Forbes* magazine rated Canada as the number one place to invest.

Perhaps the member could indicate why she would like to have more debate about a plan that is clearly working. It is time to move on and to keep working on behalf of employees, Canadians and employers.

[Translation]

**Ms. Lysane Blanchette-Lamothe:** Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the hon. member for his comments. I am not ready to say that Canada's economy is presently in tatters. There has been some success, but I do not think the Conservatives should claim that we are far better off than others. I do not think they should be patting themselves on the back and moving on. There are still a lot of people who need strong economic measures. If the hon. member agrees that there are improvements to be made, why not implement them instead of proposing measures that are all smoke and mirrors?

*Government Orders*

● (1415)

**Mr. Tarik Brahmī (Saint-Jean, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to congratulate my colleague, the hon. member for Pierrefonds—Dollard, on her passionate speech. She brought up a very interesting issue, that of seniors, and female seniors face particular challenges, as the majority of them live in poverty. I would like her to explain the concerns that are particular to this segment of the population.

**Ms. Lysane Blanchette-Lamothé:** Mr. Speaker, indeed, a large number of our seniors are still living in poverty and, for many reasons, most of them are women. Unfortunately, this government does not seem to consider poverty among seniors in its economic objectives. However, every person in our society is part of the economy. Seniors contribute a great deal to society through volunteer work thanks to their knowledge and expertise. They are part of this huge machine that is the economy and we need to pay serious attention to them.

**Ms. Ève Péclet (La Pointe-de-l'Île, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I wonder if my hon. colleague could enlighten the other members.

Since this parliament began on June 2, the Conservatives keep saying that the NDP wants to raise taxes. That is false. We are simply asking the government to stop lowering taxes for large corporations and to stop giving them billions of dollars in perks and gifts. I wonder if my colleague could explain the NDP's plan so that they understand.

**Ms. Lysane Blanchette-Lamothé:** Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for her heated question. I would expect nothing less from her.

It is clear that there is a lot of misinformation going around here. Members accuse our party of wanting to increase taxes, saying that everyone will have to pay the price. The NDP is in favour of lowering taxes, but not the taxes of banks and oil companies, which already have a lot of money and high profits. We would rather lower taxes for the people who truly create jobs.

[English]

**Mr. Rick Norlock (Northumberland—Quinte West, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, what a pleasure it is to rise today and speak to Bill C-13, Keeping Canada's Economy and Jobs Growing Act.

Before I do, I would like to wish all my constituents, you, Mr. Speaker, and my colleagues a happy Thanksgiving. I too would like to remind people that there are those who are less fortunate, and if we cannot be there to help out at one of the places that the less privileged go to have a meal, perhaps we could drop a few extra dollars in the collection plate on Sunday or on the day we choose to worship.

While I am on my feet, I would like to congratulate the Progressive Conservative candidate in Northumberland—Quinte West, Rob Milligan, for his success last night in Ontario's election.

As I say, it is a pleasure to rise today to speak to this new budget implementation plan.

Our government remains focused on what matters to Canadians. We will follow through on our commitments that we made during the last election. The keeping Canada's economy and jobs growing act would make further investments in training and education while

enacting new provisions that will support families and communities like those in Northumberland—Quinte West.

I would like to spend just a few moments speaking about the important initiatives included in this bill. Extending the accelerated capital cost allowance would help manufacturers make new investments in machinery and equipment. That means they would be able to create the productivity necessary to compete with other countries in this very competitive global economy.

Providing a hiring credit for small business, which will be a one-time credit of up to \$1,000 to encourage additional hiring, is geared specifically to those small enterprises that foresee making an investment in human resources and creating one or perhaps two jobs that will give somebody a living wage and at the same time increase their competitiveness and create an even better economy.

Another measure would enhance the medical expense tax credit by removing the limit on the amount of eligible medical expenses that can be claimed on behalf of a financially dependent relative.

With regard to Canadian families, the government's economic plan would support families through targeted initiatives such as the children's arts tax credit, which would provide up to \$500 in eligible fees for programs associated with arts, culture and recreational activities.

I am always encouraging my children. I only had two, and they each have two. I think that is about the Canadian average. If people happen to have a son or a daughter, because of what the government has done with regard to assistance to families, if their son happens to play hockey, there would be a \$500 tax credit. If their son wants to take guitar or piano lessons, this initiative in the budget would provide an additional \$500. If they have a daughter who plays ringette or badminton, there would be \$500 for her.

In total, for a family of two who are very active in their community, and I would suggest Canadians are active in their communities, there would be significant benefits in this budget for just such a family. I encourage all my constituents and Canadians to take full advantage of those benefits.

The bill also addresses one of the most dangerous challenges to our health in this country, and that is obesity. This government wants to incent people to go out and be the fullest, best people they can be by becoming active in sport and by becoming active mentally and displaying those talents that the good Lord gave us, whether they be in music, vocal, painting or sculpting.

Also included in this budget is the family caregiver tax credit, which would provide up to \$2,000 for the caregivers of loved ones with infirmities.



This budget has targets and initiatives that will benefit all Canadians. However, there are also multiple aspects of this budget that will benefit my riding of Northumberland—Quinte West. There is \$20 million in funding over the next two years for the eastern Ontario development program. The EODP is essential for the funding and support of our local Community Futures Development Corporation. The CFDC provides direct guidance and consultation to local businesses and helps foster growth and prosperity throughout eastern Ontario and in my riding of Northumberland—Quinte West.

● (1420)

I often speak with constituents who are starting a new business. It may be someone with a talent in hairdressing or someone who is a good cook and wants to open up a healthy neighbourhood restaurant like the 100 Mile Diner. At one time the items on that diner's menu contained only products and produce found within 100 miles to support local agriculture. The CFDCs are there to help.

For the entrepreneur who wants to expand his or her business beyond the borders of Ontario or Canada into the United States, the CFDCs are there to help mentor and provide access to those avenues of additional funding, whether they be venture funding or funding through the Export Development Bank. There is hundreds of millions of dollars to support innovation, investment and market diversification.

We are legislating a permanent gas tax rebate for municipalities. This means a total annual investment of some \$2 billion in gas tax funding for infrastructure priorities in Canadian municipalities. The rebate is also a sign that the government realizes the challenges that Canadians with low incomes face. As such, the rebate is an attempt to further ensure that infrastructure costs are not downloaded onto the taxpayer.

What does this really mean?

By legislating this, the Federation of Canadian Municipalities says that the municipalities that want to leverage their gas tax money to acquire funds to build the infrastructure necessary to attract businesses and to further develop their communities would be able to do so.

The government is there for municipalities, unlike past governments which, to balance their books, actually downloaded costs onto the provinces which further downloaded costs onto the municipalities. We are doing the exact opposite. I am very proud of that.

We are establishing a volunteer firefighter tax credit for firefighters who bravely serve our communities. This tax credit is of great importance to many of my constituents who live in communities like mine that often rely on volunteer firefighters.

Whenever I go into the village of Warkworth where I live or the other towns and villages in my riding, the first thing I notice is the volunteer fire stations in those smaller communities. Men and women are prepared to jump into their vehicles at any time of the day or night to help save people's homes and lives. While we sleep soundly in our beds, they are out there helping people, sometimes in the worst weather conditions. We need to help them.

### *Government Orders*

Bill C-13 reinforces the government's commitment to the communities of eastern Ontario. The bill includes a tax credit for volunteer firefighters, legislation for a gas tax rebate and infrastructure for funding for the eastern Ontario development program. These initiatives will encourage job growth in our communities and put more money into the pockets of the hard-working people of Northumberland—Quinte West.

In listening to some of the questions and answers today we were given a good lesson on how something as simple as a pencil can increase employment and make the communities in which we live an even better place.

When I hear people talking about less privileged Canadians, I think of all the good work we have done in previous budgets. We have taken one million low income Canadians off the federal tax rolls completely. Many of those Canadians are seniors, like my mother, who asked for an increase in the guaranteed income supplement. We provided that. I was proud to be able to call her to tell her that.

My mother was at my re-election victory party and I told her about her input with regard to single seniors. Most of the single seniors are mothers like mine who depend on their old age pension and their guaranteed income supplement. I know that she, as well as many of my constituents, were happy with the second increase in the guaranteed income supplement.

It is for that reason and many more that I encourage all members of the House to support Bill C-13.

● (1425)

[Translation]

**Ms. Alexandrine Latendresse (Louis-Saint-Laurent, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I was listening closely to my colleague's speech. He provided a very long list of tax credits being proposed in this budget. Unfortunately, for the most part, they are non-refundable. Therefore these tax credits mean nothing to those who do not pay taxes or pay very little in taxes, because they will not be able to use them. The bottom line is that those who need help the most to ensure that their children can take part in certain activities will not have access to these measures.

How will encouraging these measures help those who are most needy right now?

[English]

**Mr. Rick Norlock:** Mr. Speaker, if we were to take each of these tax measures individually, they may fall short in some other area. However, if we were to take them globally, and if we were to take the two previous budgets, we would see that, as I mentioned before, a million low-income Canadians no longer pay federal income tax.

We heard that just this month this economy created, through the good guidance of our government, 60,000 additional jobs. That, added to the 600,000, provides for people who did not have a job before.

*Government Orders*

What my hon. colleague also needs to know is that all of these measures that I just explained, in addition to many others, we had six weeks of an election campaign where we campaigned on these measures. My constituents, as well as most of the rest of Canada, at least those people who sent this side of the House here, said that they were good measures, that they were the measures that were right for our economy and that they were the measures that they thought we needed to have. We agree with them and they agreed with us, which is why we are presenting this budget again.

I am confident that every member of the House, if they really give it some non-partisan thought, will think it is a great idea and will vote for it.

● (1430)

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bruce Stanton):** The hon. member for Northumberland—Quinte West will have three minutes remaining

for questions and comments at the next occasion that the House considers this motion.

I will take this time to wish all hon. members, and express those same sentiments to the tremendous staff of the House of Commons, our clerks, pages, viewers here this afternoon and all members who have joined us this afternoon, a terrific Thanksgiving weekend.

[*Translation*]

I would like to wish everyone a happy Thanksgiving weekend.

[*English*]

It being 2:30 p.m., the House stands adjourned until Monday, October 17 at 11 a.m. pursuant to Standing Orders 24(1) and 28(2).

(The House adjourned at 2:30 p.m.)

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## **APPENDIX**

**ALPHABETICAL LIST OF MEMBERS WITH THEIR  
CONSTITUENCIES, PROVINCE OF CONSTITUENCY  
AND POLITICAL AFFILIATIONS;  
COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE,  
THE MINISTRY AND PARLIAMENTARY SECRETARY**

**CHAIR OCCUPANTS**

**The Speaker**

HON. ANDREW SCHEER

**The Deputy Speaker and Chair of Committees of the Whole**

MS. DENISE SAVOIE

**The Deputy Chair of Committees of the Whole**

MR. BARRY DEVOLIN

**The Assistant Deputy Chair of Committees of the Whole**

MR. BRUCE STANTON

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**BOARD OF INTERNAL ECONOMY**

HON. ANDREW SCHEER

MS. CHRIS CHARLTON

MS. JUDY FOOTE

HON. ROB MERRIFIELD

MR. THOMAS MULCAIR

HON. GORDON O'CONNOR

HON. PETER VAN LOAN



## ALPHABETICAL LIST OF MEMBERS OF THE HOUSE OF COMMONS

## First Session—Forty-first Parliament

Name of Member	Constituency	Province of Constituency	Political Affiliation
Ablonczy, Hon. Diane, Minister of State of Foreign Affairs (Americas and Consular Affairs)	Calgary—Nose Hill	Alberta	CPC
Adams, Eve, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Veterans Affairs	Mississauga—Brampton South	Ontario	CPC
Adler, Mark	York Centre	Ontario	CPC
Aglukkaq, Hon. Leona, Minister of Health and Minister of the Canadian Northern Economic Development Agency	Nunavut	Nunavut	CPC
Albas, Dan	Okanagan—Coquihalla	British Columbia	CPC
Albrecht, Harold	Kitchener—Conestoga	Ontario	CPC
Alexander, Chris, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of National Defence	Ajax—Pickering	Ontario	CPC
Allen, Malcolm	Welland	Ontario	NDP
Allen, Mike	Tobique—Mactaquac	New Brunswick	CPC
Allison, Dean	Niagara West—Glanbrook	Ontario	CPC
Ambler, Stella	Mississauga South	Ontario	CPC
Ambrose, Hon. Rona, Minister of Public Works and Government Services and Minister for Status of Women	Edmonton—Spruce Grove	Alberta	CPC
Anders, Rob	Calgary West	Alberta	CPC
Anderson, David, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Natural Resources and for the Canadian Wheat Board	Cypress Hills—Grasslands	Saskatchewan	CPC
Andrews, Scott	Avalon	Newfoundland and Labrador	Lib.
Angus, Charlie	Timmins—James Bay	Ontario	NDP
Armstrong, Scott	Cumberland—Colchester— Musquodoboit Valley	Nova Scotia	CPC
Ashfield, Hon. Keith, Minister of Fisheries and Oceans and Minister for the Atlantic Gateway	Fredericton	New Brunswick	CPC
Ashton, Niki	Churchill	Manitoba	NDP
Aspin, Jay	Nipissing—Timiskaming	Ontario	CPC
Atamanenko, Alex	British Columbia Southern Interior	British Columbia	NDP
Aubin, Robert	Trois-Rivières	Québec	NDP
Ayala, Paulina	Honoré-Mercier	Québec	NDP
Baird, Hon. John, Minister of Foreign Affairs	Ottawa West—Nepean	Ontario	CPC
Bateman, Joyce	Winnipeg South Centre	Manitoba	CPC
Bélanger, Hon. Mauril	Ottawa—Vanier	Ontario	Lib.
Bellavance, André	Richmond—Arthabaska	Québec	BQ
Bennett, Hon. Carolyn	St. Paul's	Ontario	Lib.
Benoit, Leon	Vegreville—Wainwright	Alberta	CPC
Benskin, Tyrone	Jeanne-Le Ber	Québec	NDP
Bernier, Hon. Maxime, Minister of State (Small Business and Tourism)	Beauce	Québec	CPC
Bevington, Dennis	Western Arctic	Northwest Territories	NDP
Bezan, James	Selkirk—Interlake	Manitoba	CPC
Blanchette, Denis	Louis-Hébert	Québec	NDP
Blanchette-Lamothe, Lysane	Pierrefonds—Dollard	Québec	NDP
Blaney, Hon. Steven, Minister of Veterans Affairs	Lévis—Bellechasse	Québec	CPC
Block, Kelly	Saskatoon—Rosetown—Biggar	Saskatchewan	CPC

Name of Member	Constituency	Province of Constituency	Political Affiliation
Boivin, Françoise	Gatineau	Québec	NDP
Borg, Charmaine	Terrebonne—Blainville	Québec	NDP
Boughen, Ray	Palliser	Saskatchewan	CPC
Boulerice, Alexandre	Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie	Québec	NDP
Boutin-Sweet, Marjolaine	Hochelaga	Québec	NDP
Brahmi, Tarik	Saint-Jean	Québec	NDP
Braid, Peter	Kitchener—Waterloo	Ontario	CPC
Breitkreuz, Garry	Yorkton—Melville	Saskatchewan	CPC
Brisson, Hon. Scott	Kings—Hants	Nova Scotia	Lib.
Brousseau, Ruth Ellen	Berthier—Maskinongé	Québec	NDP
Brown, Gordon	Leeds—Grenville	Ontario	CPC
Brown, Lois, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of International Cooperation	Newmarket—Aurora	Ontario	CPC
Brown, Patrick	Barrie	Ontario	CPC
Bruinooge, Rod	Winnipeg South	Manitoba	CPC
Butt, Brad	Mississauga—Streetsville	Ontario	CPC
Byrne, Hon. Gerry	Humber—St. Barbe—Baie Verte	Newfoundland and Labrador	Lib.
Calandra, Paul, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Canadian Heritage	Oak Ridges—Markham	Ontario	CPC
Calkins, Blaine	Wetaskiwin	Alberta	CPC
Cannan, Ron	Kelowna—Lake Country	British Columbia	CPC
Carmichael, John	Don Valley West	Ontario	CPC
Caron, Guy	Rimouski-Neigette— Témiscouata—Les Basques	Québec	NDP
Carrie, Colin, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Health	Oshawa	Ontario	CPC
Casey, Sean	Charlottetown	Prince Edward Island	Lib.
Cash, Andrew	Davenport	Ontario	NDP
Charlton, Chris	Hamilton Mountain	Ontario	NDP
Chicoine, Sylvain	Châteauguay—Saint-Constant	Québec	NDP
Chisholm, Robert	Dartmouth—Cole Harbour	Nova Scotia	NDP
Chisu, Corneliu	Pickering—Scarborough East	Ontario	CPC
Chong, Hon. Michael	Wellington—Halton Hills	Ontario	CPC
Choquette, François	Drummond	Québec	NDP
Chow, Olivia	Trinity—Spadina	Ontario	NDP
Christopherson, David	Hamilton Centre	Ontario	NDP
Clarke, Rob	Desnethé—Missinippi— Churchill River	Saskatchewan	CPC
Cleary, Ryan	St. John's South—Mount Pearl	Newfoundland and Labrador	NDP
Clement, Hon. Tony, President of the Treasury Board and Minister for the Federal Economic Development Initiative for Northern Ontario	Parry Sound—Muskoka	Ontario	CPC
Coderre, Hon. Denis	Bourassa	Québec	Lib.
Comartin, Joe	Windsor—Tecumseh	Ontario	NDP
Côté, Raymond	Beauport—Limoilou	Québec	NDP
Cotler, Hon. Irwin	Mount Royal	Québec	Lib.
Crowder, Jean	Nanaimo—Cowichan	British Columbia	NDP
Cullen, Nathan	Skeena—Bulkley Valley	British Columbia	NDP
Cuzner, Rodger	Cape Breton—Canso	Nova Scotia	Lib.
Daniel, Joe	Don Valley East	Ontario	CPC



Name of Member	Constituency	Province of Constituency	Political Affiliation
Davidson, Patricia	Sarnia—Lambton	Ontario	CPC
Davies, Don	Vancouver Kingsway	British Columbia	NDP
Davies, Libby	Vancouver East	British Columbia	NDP
Day, Anne-Marie	Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles	Québec	NDP
Dechert, Bob, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs	Mississauga—Erindale	Ontario	CPC
Del Mastro, Dean, Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister and to the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs	Peterborough	Ontario	CPC
Devolin, Barry, The Acting Speaker	Haliburton—Kawartha Lakes—Brock	Ontario	CPC
Dewar, Paul	Ottawa Centre	Ontario	NDP
Dion, Hon. Stéphane, Saint-Laurent—Cartierville	Saint-Laurent—Cartierville	Québec	Lib.
Dionne Labelle, Pierre	Rivière-du-Nord	Québec	NDP
Donnelly, Fin	New Westminster—Coquitlam	British Columbia	NDP
Doré Lefebvre, Rosane	Alfred-Pellan	Québec	NDP
Dreeschen, Earl	Red Deer	Alberta	CPC
Dubé, Matthew	Chambly—Borduas	Québec	NDP
Duncan, Hon. John, Minister of Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development	Vancouver Island North	British Columbia	CPC
Duncan, Kirsty	Etobicoke North	Ontario	Lib.
Duncan, Linda	Edmonton—Strathcona	Alberta	NDP
Dusseau, Pierre-Luc	Sherbrooke	Québec	NDP
Dykstra, Rick, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration	St. Catharines	Ontario	CPC
Easter, Hon. Wayne	Malpeque	Prince Edward Island	Lib.
Eyking, Hon. Mark	Sydney—Victoria	Nova Scotia	Lib.
Fantino, Hon. Julian, Associate Minister of National Defence	Vaughan	Ontario	CPC
Fast, Hon. Ed, Minister of International Trade and Minister for the Asia-Pacific Gateway	Abbotsford	British Columbia	CPC
Findlay, Kerry-Lynne D., Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Justice	Delta—Richmond East	British Columbia	CPC
Finley, Hon. Diane, Minister of Human Resources and Skills Development	Haldimand—Norfolk	Ontario	CPC
Flaherty, Hon. Jim, Minister of Finance	Whitby—Oshawa	Ontario	CPC
Fletcher, Hon. Steven, Minister of State (Transport)	Charleswood—St. James—Assiniboia	Manitoba	CPC
Foote, Judy	Random—Burin—St. George's	Newfoundland and Labrador	Lib.
Fortin, Jean-François	Haute-Gaspésie—La Mitis—Matane—Matapédia	Québec	BQ
Freeman, Mylène	Argenteuil—Papineau—Mirabel	Québec	NDP
Fry, Hon. Hedy	Vancouver Centre	British Columbia	Lib.
Galipeau, Royal	Ottawa—Orléans	Ontario	CPC
Gallant, Cheryl	Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke	Ontario	CPC
Garneau, Marc	Westmount—Ville-Marie	Québec	Lib.
Garrison, Randall	Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca	British Columbia	NDP
Genest, Réjean	Shefford	Québec	NDP
Genest-Jourdain, Jonathan	Manicouagan	Québec	NDP
Giguère, Alain	Marc-Aurèle-Fortin	Québec	NDP

Name of Member	Constituency	Province of Constituency	Political Affiliation
Gill, Parm	Brampton—Springdale	Ontario	CPC
Glover, Shelly, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance	Saint Boniface	Manitoba	CPC
Godin, Yvon	Acadie—Bathurst	New Brunswick	NDP
Goguen, Robert, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Justice	Moncton—Riverview—Dieppe	New Brunswick	CPC
Goldring, Peter	Edmonton East	Alberta	CPC
Goodale, Hon. Ralph	Wascana	Saskatchewan	Lib.
Goodyear, Hon. Gary, Minister of State (Science and Technology) (Federal Economic Development Agency for Southern Ontario)	Cambridge	Ontario	CPC
Gosal, Hon. Bal, Minister of State (Sport)	Bramalea—Gore—Malton	Ontario	CPC
Gourde, Jacques, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Works and Government Services, for Official Languages and for the Economic Development Agency for the Regions of Quebec	Lotbinière—Chutes-de-la-Chaudière	Québec	CPC
Gravelle, Claude	Nickel Belt	Ontario	NDP
Grewal, Nina	Fleetwood—Port Kells	British Columbia	CPC
Groguhé, Saïdia	Saint-Lambert	Québec	NDP
Harper, Right Hon. Stephen, Prime Minister	Calgary Southwest	Alberta	CPC
Harris, Dan	Scarborough Southwest	Ontario	NDP
Harris, Jack	Newfoundland and Labrador		
	St. John's East	Labrador	NDP
Harris, Richard	Cariboo—Prince George	British Columbia	CPC
Hassainia, Sana	Verchères—Les Patriotes	Québec	NDP
Hawn, Hon. Laurie	Edmonton Centre	Alberta	CPC
Hayes, Bryan	Sault Ste. Marie	Ontario	CPC
Hiebert, Russ	South Surrey—White Rock—Cloverdale	British Columbia	CPC
Hillyer, Jim	Lethbridge	Alberta	CPC
Hoback, Randy	Prince Albert	Saskatchewan	CPC
Hoepfner, Candice, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Safety	Portage—Lisgar	Manitoba	CPC
Holder, Ed	London West	Ontario	CPC
Hsu, Ted	Kingston and the Islands	Ontario	Lib.
Hughes, Carol	Algoma—Manitoulin—Kapuskasing	Ontario	NDP
Hyer, Bruce	Thunder Bay—Superior North	Ontario	NDP
Jacob, Pierre	Brome—Missisquoi	Québec	NDP
James, Roxanne	Scarborough Centre	Ontario	CPC
Jean, Brian	Fort McMurray—Athabasca	Alberta	CPC
Julian, Peter	Burnaby—New Westminster	British Columbia	NDP
Kamp, Randy, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans and for the Asia-Pacific Gateway	Pitt Meadows—Maple Ridge—Mission	British Columbia	CPC
Karygiannis, Hon. Jim	Scarborough—Agincourt	Ontario	Lib.
Keddy, Gerald, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of International Trade, for the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency and for the Atlantic Gateway	South Shore—St. Margaret's	Nova Scotia	CPC
Kellway, Matthew	Beaches—East York	Ontario	NDP
Kenney, Hon. Jason, Minister of Citizenship, Immigration and Multiculturalism	Calgary Southeast	Alberta	CPC
Kent, Hon. Peter, Minister of the Environment	Thornhill	Ontario	CPC
Kerr, Greg	West Nova	Nova Scotia	CPC
Komarnicki, Ed	Souris—Moose Mountain	Saskatchewan	CPC
Kramp, Daryl	Prince Edward—Hastings	Ontario	CPC



Name of Member	Constituency	Province of Constituency	Political Affiliation
Lake, Mike, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Industry ...	Edmonton—Mill Woods— Beaumont.....	Alberta .....	CPC
Lamoureux, Kevin .....	Winnipeg North .....	Manitoba .....	Lib.
Lapointe, François .....	Montmagny—L'Islet— Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup .....	Québec .....	NDP
Larose, Jean-François .....	Repentigny .....	Québec .....	NDP
Latendresse, Alexandrine .....	Louis-Saint-Laurent .....	Québec .....	NDP
Lauzon, Guy .....	Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry .....	Ontario .....	CPC
Laverdière, Hélène .....	Laurier—Sainte-Marie .....	Québec .....	NDP
Lebel, Hon. Denis, Minister of Transport, Infrastructure and Communities and Minister of the Economic Development Agency of Canada for the Regions of Quebec .....	Roberval—Lac-Saint-Jean .....	Québec .....	CPC
LeBlanc, Hon. Dominic .....	Beauséjour .....	New Brunswick .....	Lib.
LeBlanc, Hélène .....	LaSalle—Émard .....	Québec .....	NDP
Leef, Ryan .....	Yukon .....	Yukon .....	CPC
Leitch, Kellie, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Human Resources and Skills Development and to the Minister of Labour .....	Simcoe—Grey .....	Ontario .....	CPC
Lemieux, Pierre, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Agriculture .....	Glengarry—Prescott—Russell .....	Ontario .....	CPC
Leslie, Megan .....	Halifax .....	Nova Scotia .....	NDP
Leung, Chungsen, Parliamentary Secretary for Multiculturalism ....	Willowdale .....	Ontario .....	CPC
Liu, Laurin .....	Rivière-des-Mille-Îles .....	Québec .....	NDP
Lizon, Wladyslaw .....	Mississauga East—Cooksville .....	Ontario .....	CPC
Lobb, Ben .....	Huron—Bruce .....	Ontario .....	CPC
Lukiwski, Tom, Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons .....	Regina—Lumsden—Lake Centre .....	Saskatchewan .....	CPC
Lunney, James .....	Nanaimo—Alberni .....	British Columbia .....	CPC
MacAulay, Hon. Lawrence .....	Cardigan .....	Prince Edward Island .....	Lib.
MacKay, Hon. Peter, Minister of National Defence .....	Central Nova .....	Nova Scotia .....	CPC
MacKenzie, Dave .....	Oxford .....	Ontario .....	CPC
Mai, Hoang .....	Brossard—La Prairie .....	Québec .....	NDP
Marston, Wayne .....	Hamilton East—Stoney Creek .....	Ontario .....	NDP
Martin, Pat .....	Winnipeg Centre .....	Manitoba .....	NDP
Masse, Brian .....	Windsor West .....	Ontario .....	NDP
Mathysen, Irene .....	London—Fanshawe .....	Ontario .....	NDP
May, Elizabeth .....	Saanich—Gulf Islands .....	British Columbia .....	GP
Mayes, Colin .....	Okanagan—Shuswap .....	British Columbia .....	CPC
McCallum, Hon. John .....	Markham—Unionville .....	Ontario .....	Lib.
McColeman, Phil .....	Brant .....	Ontario .....	CPC
McGuinty, David .....	Ottawa South .....	Ontario .....	Lib.
McKay, Hon. John .....	Scarborough—Guildwood .....	Ontario .....	Lib.
McLeod, Cathy, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of National Revenue .....	Kamloops—Thompson— Cariboo .....	British Columbia .....	CPC
Menegakis, Costas .....	Richmond Hill .....	Ontario .....	CPC
Menzies, Hon. Ted, Minister of State (Finance) .....	Macleod .....	Alberta .....	CPC
Merrifield, Hon. Rob .....	Yellowhead .....	Alberta .....	CPC
Michaud, Éline .....	Portneuf—Jacques-Cartier .....	Québec .....	NDP
Miller, Larry .....	Bruce—Grey—Owen Sound .....	Ontario .....	CPC
Moore, Christine .....	Abitibi—Témiscamingue .....	Québec .....	NDP

Name of Member	Constituency	Province of Constituency	Political Affiliation
Moore, Hon. James, Minister of Canadian Heritage and Official Languages .....	Port Moody—Westwood—Port Coquitlam .....	British Columbia .....	CPC
Moore, Hon. Rob .....	Fundy Royal .....	New Brunswick .....	CPC
Morin, Dany .....	Chicoutimi—Le Fjord .....	Québec .....	NDP
Morin, Isabelle .....	Notre-Dame-de-Grâce—Lachine .....	Québec .....	NDP
Morin, Marc-André .....	Laurentides—Labelle .....	Québec .....	NDP
Morin, Marie-Claude .....	Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot .....	Québec .....	NDP
Mourani, Maria .....	Ahuntsic .....	Québec .....	BQ
Mulcair, Thomas .....	Outremont .....	Québec .....	NDP
Murray, Joyce .....	Vancouver Quadra .....	British Columbia .....	Lib.
Nantel, Pierre .....	Longueuil—Pierre-Boucher .....	Québec .....	NDP
Nash, Peggy .....	Parkdale—High Park .....	Ontario .....	NDP
Nicholls, Jamie .....	Vaudreuil—Soulanges .....	Québec .....	NDP
Nicholson, Hon. Rob, Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada .....	Niagara Falls .....	Ontario .....	CPC
Norlock, Rick .....	Northumberland—Quinte West .....	Ontario .....	CPC
Nunez-Melo, José .....	Laval .....	Québec .....	NDP
O'Connor, Hon. Gordon, Minister of State and Chief Government Whip .....	Carleton—Mississippi Mills .....	Ontario .....	CPC
O'Neill Gordon, Tilly .....	Miramichi .....	New Brunswick .....	CPC
Obhrai, Deepak, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs .....	Calgary East .....	Alberta .....	CPC
Oda, Hon. Bev, Minister of International Cooperation .....	Durham .....	Ontario .....	CPC
Oliver, Hon. Joe, Minister of Natural Resources .....	Eglinton—Lawrence .....	Ontario .....	CPC
Opitz, Ted .....	Etobicoke Centre .....	Ontario .....	CPC
Pacetti, Massimo .....	Saint-Léonard—Saint-Michel .....	Québec .....	Lib.
Papillon, Annick .....	Québec .....	Québec .....	NDP
Paradis, Hon. Christian, Minister of Industry and Minister of State (Agriculture) .....	Mégantic—L'Érable .....	Québec .....	CPC
Patry, Claude .....	Jonquière—Alma .....	Québec .....	NDP
Payne, LaVar .....	Medicine Hat .....	Alberta .....	CPC
Péclet, Ève .....	La Pointe-de-l'Île .....	Québec .....	NDP
Penashue, Hon. Peter, Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs and President of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada .....	Labrador .....	Newfoundland and Labrador .....	CPC
Perreault, Manon .....	Montcalm .....	Québec .....	NDP
Pilon, François .....	Laval—Les Îles .....	Québec .....	NDP
Plamondon, Louis .....	Bas-Richelieu—Nicolet—Bécancour .....	Québec .....	BQ
Poilievre, Pierre, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Transport, Infrastructure and Communities and for the Federal Economic Development Agency for Southern Ontario .....	Nepean—Carleton .....	Ontario .....	CPC
Preston, Joe .....	Elgin—Middlesex—London .....	Ontario .....	CPC
Quach, Anne Minh-Thu .....	Beauharnois—Salaberry .....	Québec .....	NDP
Rae, Hon. Bob .....	Toronto Centre .....	Ontario .....	Lib.
Rafferty, John .....	Thunder Bay—Rainy River .....	Ontario .....	NDP
Raitt, Hon. Lisa, Minister of Labour .....	Halton .....	Ontario .....	CPC
Rajotte, James .....	Edmonton—Leduc .....	Alberta .....	CPC
Rathgeber, Brent .....	Edmonton—St. Albert .....	Alberta .....	CPC
Ravignat, Mathieu .....	Pontiac .....	Québec .....	NDP
Raynault, Francine .....	Joliette .....	Québec .....	NDP



Name of Member	Constituency	Province of Constituency	Political Affiliation
Regan, Hon. Geoff	Halifax West	Nova Scotia	Lib.
Reid, Scott	Lanark—Frontenac—Lennox and Addington	Ontario	CPC
Rempel, Michelle, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of the Environment	Calgary Centre-North	Alberta	CPC
Richards, Blake	Wild Rose	Alberta	CPC
Richardson, Lee	Calgary Centre	Alberta	CPC
Rickford, Greg, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development, for the Canadian Northern Economic Development Agency and for the Federal Economic Development Initiative for Northern Ontario	Kenora	Ontario	CPC
Ritz, Hon. Gerry, Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food and Minister for the Canadian Wheat Board	Battlefords—Lloydminster	Saskatchewan	CPC
Rousseau, Jean	Compton—Stanstead	Québec	NDP
Saganash, Romeo	Abitibi—Baie-James—Nunavik—Eeyou	Québec	NDP
Sandhu, Jasbir	Surrey North	British Columbia	NDP
Savoie, Denise, The Deputy Speaker	Victoria	British Columbia	NDP
Saxton, Andrew, Parliamentary Secretary to the President of the Treasury Board and for Western Economic Diversification	North Vancouver	British Columbia	CPC
Scarpaleggia, Francis	Lac-Saint-Louis	Québec	Lib.
Scheer, Hon. Andrew, Speaker of the House of Commons	Regina—Qu'Appelle	Saskatchewan	CPC
Schellenberger, Gary	Perth—Wellington	Ontario	CPC
Seeback, Kyle	Brampton West	Ontario	CPC
Sellah, Djaouida	Saint-Bruno—Saint-Hubert	Québec	NDP
Sgro, Hon. Judy	York West	Ontario	Lib.
Shea, Hon. Gail, Minister of National Revenue	Egmont	Prince Edward Island	CPC
Shipley, Bev	Lambton—Kent—Middlesex	Ontario	CPC
Shory, Devinder	Calgary Northeast	Alberta	CPC
Simms, Scott	Bonavista—Gander—Grand Falls—Windsor	Newfoundland and Labrador	Lib.
Sims, Jinny Jogindera	Newton—North Delta	British Columbia	NDP
Sitsabaiesan, Rathika	Scarborough—Rouge River	Ontario	NDP
Smith, Joy	Kildonan—St. Paul	Manitoba	CPC
Sopuck, Robert	Dauphin—Swan River—Marquette	Manitoba	CPC
Sorenson, Kevin	Crowfoot	Alberta	CPC
St-Denis, Lise	Saint-Maurice—Champlain	Québec	NDP
Stanton, Bruce, The Acting Speaker	Simcoe North	Ontario	CPC
Stewart, Kennedy	Burnaby—Douglas	British Columbia	NDP
Stoffer, Peter	Sackville—Eastern Shore	Nova Scotia	NDP
Storseth, Brian	Westlock—St. Paul	Alberta	CPC
Strahl, Mark	Chilliwack—Fraser Canyon	British Columbia	CPC
Sullivan, Mike	York South—Weston	Ontario	NDP
Sweet, David	Ancaster—Dundas—Flamborough—Westdale	Ontario	CPC
Thibeault, Glenn	Sudbury	Ontario	NDP
Tilson, David	Dufferin—Caledon	Ontario	CPC
Toet, Lawrence	Elmwood—Transcona	Manitoba	CPC
Toews, Hon. Vic, Minister of Public Safety	Provencher	Manitoba	CPC
Toone, Philip	Gaspésie—Îles-de-la-Madeleine	Québec	NDP

Name of Member	Constituency	Province of Constituency	Political Affiliation
Tremblay, Jonathan	Montmorency—Charlevoix— Haute-Côte-Nord	Québec	NDP
Trost, Brad	Saskatoon—Humboldt	Saskatchewan	CPC
Trottier, Bernard	Etobicoke—Lakeshore	Ontario	CPC
Trudeau, Justin	Papineau	Québec	Lib.
Truppe, Susan, Parliamentary Secretary for Status of Women	London North Centre	Ontario	CPC
Turmel, Nycole	Hull—Aylmer	Québec	NDP
Tweed, Merv	Brandon—Souris	Manitoba	CPC
Uppal, Hon. Tim, Minister of State (Democratic Reform)	Edmonton—Sherwood Park	Alberta	CPC
Valcourt, Hon. Bernard, Minister of State (Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency) (La Francophonie)	Madawaska—Restigouche	New Brunswick	CPC
Valeriote, Frank	Guelph	Ontario	Lib.
Van Kesteren, Dave	Chatham-Kent—Essex	Ontario	CPC
Van Loan, Hon. Peter, Leader of the Government in the House of Commons	York—Simcoe	Ontario	CPC
Vellacott, Maurice	Saskatoon—Wanuskewin	Saskatchewan	CPC
Wallace, Mike	Burlington	Ontario	CPC
Warawa, Mark	Langley	British Columbia	CPC
Warkentin, Chris	Peace River	Alberta	CPC
Watson, Jeff	Essex	Ontario	CPC
Weston, John	West Vancouver—Sunshine Coast—Sea to Sky Country	British Columbia	CPC
Weston, Rodney	Saint John	New Brunswick	CPC
Wilks, David	Kootenay—Columbia	British Columbia	CPC
Williamson, John	New Brunswick Southwest	New Brunswick	CPC
Wong, Hon. Alice, Minister of State (Seniors)	Richmond	British Columbia	CPC
Woodworth, Stephen	Kitchener Centre	Ontario	CPC
Yelich, Hon. Lynne, Minister of State (Western Economic Diversi- fication)	Blackstrap	Saskatchewan	CPC
Young, Terence	Oakville	Ontario	CPC
Young, Wai	Vancouver South	British Columbia	CPC
Zimmer, Bob	Prince George—Peace River	British Columbia	CPC
VACANCY	Toronto—Danforth	Ontario	

N.B.: Under Political Affiliation: Lib. - Liberal; CPC - Conservative; BQ - Bloc Québécois; NDP - New Democratic Party; GP - Green Party; Ind. - Independent



## ALPHABETICAL LIST OF MEMBERS OF THE HOUSE OF COMMONS BY PROVINCE

## First Session—Forty-first Parliament

Name of Member	Constituency	Political Affiliation
<b>ALBERTA (28)</b>		
Ablonczy, Hon. Diane, Minister of State of Foreign Affairs (Americas and Consular Affairs) .....	Calgary—Nose Hill .....	CPC
Ambrose, Hon. Rona, Minister of Public Works and Government Services and Minister for Status of Women .....	Edmonton—Spruce Grove .....	CPC
Anders, Rob .....	Calgary West .....	CPC
Benoit, Leon .....	Vegreville—Wainwright .....	CPC
Calkins, Blaine .....	Wetaskiwin .....	CPC
Dreeshen, Earl .....	Red Deer .....	CPC
Duncan, Linda .....	Edmonton—Strathcona .....	NDP
Goldring, Peter .....	Edmonton East .....	CPC
Harper, Right Hon. Stephen, Prime Minister .....	Calgary Southwest .....	CPC
Hawn, Hon. Laurie .....	Edmonton Centre .....	CPC
Hillyer, Jim .....	Lethbridge .....	CPC
Jean, Brian .....	Fort McMurray—Athabasca .....	CPC
Kenney, Hon. Jason, Minister of Citizenship, Immigration and Multiculturalism ...	Calgary Southeast .....	CPC
Lake, Mike, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Industry .....	Edmonton—Mill Woods—Beaumont ...	CPC
Menzies, Hon. Ted, Minister of State (Finance) .....	Macleod .....	CPC
Merrifield, Hon. Rob .....	Yellowhead .....	CPC
Obhrai, Deepak, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs .....	Calgary East .....	CPC
Payne, LaVar .....	Medicine Hat .....	CPC
Rajotte, James .....	Edmonton—Leduc .....	CPC
Rathgeber, Brent .....	Edmonton—St. Albert .....	CPC
Rempel, Michelle, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of the Environment ...	Calgary Centre-North .....	CPC
Richards, Blake .....	Wild Rose .....	CPC
Richardson, Lee .....	Calgary Centre .....	CPC
Shory, Devinder .....	Calgary Northeast .....	CPC
Sorenson, Kevin .....	Crowfoot .....	CPC
Storseth, Brian .....	Westlock—St. Paul .....	CPC
Uppal, Hon. Tim, Minister of State (Democratic Reform) .....	Edmonton—Sherwood Park .....	CPC
Warkentin, Chris .....	Peace River .....	CPC
<b>BRITISH COLUMBIA (36)</b>		
Albas, Dan .....	Okanagan—Coquihalla .....	CPC
Atamanenko, Alex .....	British Columbia Southern Interior .....	NDP
Cannan, Ron .....	Kelowna—Lake Country .....	CPC
Crowder, Jean .....	Nanaimo—Cowichan .....	NDP
Cullen, Nathan .....	Skeena—Bulkley Valley .....	NDP
Davies, Don .....	Vancouver Kingsway .....	NDP
Davies, Libby .....	Vancouver East .....	NDP
Donnelly, Fin .....	New Westminster—Coquitlam .....	NDP
Duncan, Hon. John, Minister of Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development ...	Vancouver Island North .....	CPC
Fast, Hon. Ed, Minister of International Trade and Minister for the Asia-Pacific Gateway .....	Abbotsford .....	CPC
Findlay, Kerry-Lynne D., Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Justice .....	Delta—Richmond East .....	CPC

Name of Member	Constituency	Political Affiliation
Fry, Hon. Hedy .....	Vancouver Centre .....	Lib.
Garrison, Randall .....	Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca .....	NDP
Grewal, Nina .....	Fleetwood—Port Kells .....	CPC
Harris, Richard .....	Cariboo—Prince George .....	CPC
Hiebert, Russ .....	South Surrey—White Rock—Cloverdale .....	CPC
Julian, Peter .....	Burnaby—New Westminster .....	NDP
Kamp, Randy, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans and for the Asia-Pacific Gateway .....	Pitt Meadows—Maple Ridge—Mission .....	CPC
Lunney, James .....	Nanaimo—Alberni .....	CPC
May, Elizabeth .....	Saanich—Gulf Islands .....	GP
Mayes, Colin .....	Okanagan—Shuswap .....	CPC
McLeod, Cathy, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of National Revenue .....	Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo .....	CPC
Moore, Hon. James, Minister of Canadian Heritage and Official Languages .....	Port Moody—Westwood—Port Coquitlam .....	CPC
Murray, Joyce .....	Vancouver Quadra .....	Lib.
Sandhu, Jasbir .....	Surrey North .....	NDP
Savoie, Denise, The Deputy Speaker .....	Victoria .....	NDP
Saxton, Andrew, Parliamentary Secretary to the President of the Treasury Board and for Western Economic Diversification .....	North Vancouver .....	CPC
Sims, Jinny Jogindera .....	Newton—North Delta .....	NDP
Stewart, Kennedy .....	Burnaby—Douglas .....	NDP
Strahl, Mark .....	Chilliwack—Fraser Canyon .....	CPC
Warawa, Mark .....	Langley .....	CPC
Weston, John .....	West Vancouver—Sunshine Coast—Sea to Sky Country .....	CPC
Wilks, David .....	Kootenay—Columbia .....	CPC
Wong, Hon. Alice, Minister of State (Seniors) .....	Richmond .....	CPC
Young, Wai .....	Vancouver South .....	CPC
Zimmer, Bob .....	Prince George—Peace River .....	CPC
<b>MANITOBA (14)</b>		
Ashton, Niki .....	Churchill .....	NDP
Bateman, Joyce .....	Winnipeg South Centre .....	CPC
Bezan, James .....	Selkirk—Interlake .....	CPC
Bruinooge, Rod .....	Winnipeg South .....	CPC
Fletcher, Hon. Steven, Minister of State (Transport) .....	Charleswood—St. James—Assiniboia .....	CPC
Glover, Shelly, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance .....	Saint Boniface .....	CPC
Hoepfner, Candice, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Safety .....	Portage—Lisgar .....	CPC
Lamoureux, Kevin .....	Winnipeg North .....	Lib.
Martin, Pat .....	Winnipeg Centre .....	NDP
Smith, Joy .....	Kildonan—St. Paul .....	CPC
Sopuck, Robert .....	Dauphin—Swan River—Marquette .....	CPC
Toet, Lawrence .....	Elmwood—Transcona .....	CPC
Toews, Hon. Vic, Minister of Public Safety .....	Provencher .....	CPC
Tweed, Merv .....	Brandon—Souris .....	CPC
<b>NEW BRUNSWICK (10)</b>		
Allen, Mike .....	Tobique—Mactaquac .....	CPC
Ashfield, Hon. Keith, Minister of Fisheries and Oceans and Minister for the Atlantic Gateway .....	Fredericton .....	CPC



Name of Member	Constituency	Political Affiliation
Godin, Yvon .....	Acadie—Bathurst .....	NDP
Goguen, Robert, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Justice .....	Moncton—Riverview—Dieppe .....	CPC
LeBlanc, Hon. Dominic .....	Beauséjour .....	Lib.
Moore, Hon. Rob .....	Fundy Royal .....	CPC
O'Neill Gordon, Tilly .....	Miramichi .....	CPC
Valcourt, Hon. Bernard, Minister of State (Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency) (La Francophonie) .....	Madawaska—Restigouche .....	CPC
Weston, Rodney .....	Saint John .....	CPC
Williamson, John .....	New Brunswick Southwest .....	CPC

#### NEWFOUNDLAND AND LABRADOR (7)

Andrews, Scott .....	Avalon .....	Lib.
Byrne, Hon. Gerry .....	Humber—St. Barbe—Baie Verte .....	Lib.
Cleary, Ryan .....	St. John's South—Mount Pearl .....	NDP
Foote, Judy .....	Random—Burin—St. George's .....	Lib.
Harris, Jack .....	St. John's East .....	NDP
Penashue, Hon. Peter, Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs and President of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada .....	Labrador .....	CPC
Simms, Scott .....	Bonavista—Gander—Grand Falls—Windsor .....	Lib.

#### NORTHWEST TERRITORIES (1)

Bevington, Dennis .....	Western Arctic .....	NDP
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#### NOVA SCOTIA (11)

Armstrong, Scott .....	Cumberland—Colchester—Musquodoboit Valley .....	CPC
Brison, Hon. Scott .....	Kings—Hants .....	Lib.
Chisholm, Robert .....	Dartmouth—Cole Harbour .....	NDP
Cuzner, Rodger .....	Cape Breton—Canso .....	Lib.
Eyking, Hon. Mark .....	Sydney—Victoria .....	Lib.
Keddy, Gerald, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of International Trade, for the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency and for the Atlantic Gateway .....	South Shore—St. Margaret's .....	CPC
Kerr, Greg .....	West Nova .....	CPC
Leslie, Megan .....	Halifax .....	NDP
MacKay, Hon. Peter, Minister of National Defence .....	Central Nova .....	CPC
Regan, Hon. Geoff .....	Halifax West .....	Lib.
Stoffer, Peter .....	Sackville—Eastern Shore .....	NDP

#### NUNAVUT (1)

Aglukkaq, Hon. Leona, Minister of Health and Minister of the Canadian Northern Economic Development Agency .....	Nunavut .....	CPC
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#### ONTARIO (105)

Adams, Eve, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Veterans Affairs .....	Mississauga—Brampton South .....	CPC
Adler, Mark .....	York Centre .....	CPC
Albrecht, Harold .....	Kitchener—Conestoga .....	CPC
Alexander, Chris, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of National Defence .....	Ajax—Pickering .....	CPC
Allen, Malcolm .....	Welland .....	NDP

Name of Member	Constituency	Political Affiliation
Allison, Dean	Niagara West—Glanbrook	CPC
Ambler, Stella	Mississauga South	CPC
Angus, Charlie	Timmins—James Bay	NDP
Aspin, Jay	Nipissing—Timiskaming	CPC
Baird, Hon. John, Minister of Foreign Affairs	Ottawa West—Nepean	CPC
Bélanger, Hon. Mauril	Ottawa—Vanier	Lib.
Bennett, Hon. Carolyn	St. Paul's	Lib.
Braid, Peter	Kitchener—Waterloo	CPC
Brown, Gordon	Leeds—Grenville	CPC
Brown, Lois, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of International Cooperation	Newmarket—Aurora	CPC
Brown, Patrick	Barrie	CPC
Butt, Brad	Mississauga—Streetsville	CPC
Calandra, Paul, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Canadian Heritage	Oak Ridges—Markham	CPC
Carmichael, John	Don Valley West	CPC
Carrie, Colin, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Health	Oshawa	CPC
Cash, Andrew	Davenport	NDP
Charlton, Chris	Hamilton Mountain	NDP
Chisu, Corneliu	Pickering—Scarborough East	CPC
Chong, Hon. Michael	Wellington—Halton Hills	CPC
Chow, Olivia	Trinity—Spadina	NDP
Christopherson, David	Hamilton Centre	NDP
Clement, Hon. Tony, President of the Treasury Board and Minister for the Federal Economic Development Initiative for Northern Ontario	Parry Sound—Muskoka	CPC
Comartin, Joe	Windsor—Tecumseh	NDP
Daniel, Joe	Don Valley East	CPC
Davidson, Patricia	Sarnia—Lambton	CPC
Dechert, Bob, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs	Mississauga—Erindale	CPC
Del Mastro, Dean, Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister and to the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs	Peterborough	CPC
Devolin, Barry, The Acting Speaker	Haliburton—Kawartha Lakes—Brock	CPC
Dewar, Paul	Ottawa Centre	NDP
Duncan, Kirsty	Etobicoke North	Lib.
Dykstra, Rick, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration	St. Catharines	CPC
Fantino, Hon. Julian, Associate Minister of National Defence	Vaughan	CPC
Finley, Hon. Diane, Minister of Human Resources and Skills Development	Haldimand—Norfolk	CPC
Flaherty, Hon. Jim, Minister of Finance	Whitby—Oshawa	CPC
Galipeau, Royal	Ottawa—Orléans	CPC
Gallant, Cheryl	Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke	CPC
Gill, Parm	Brampton—Springdale	CPC
Goodyear, Hon. Gary, Minister of State (Science and Technology) (Federal Economic Development Agency for Southern Ontario)	Cambridge	CPC
Gosal, Hon. Bal, Minister of State (Sport)	Bramalea—Gore—Malton	CPC
Gravelle, Claude	Nickel Belt	NDP
Harris, Dan	Scarborough Southwest	NDP
Hayes, Bryan	Sault Ste. Marie	CPC
Holder, Ed	London West	CPC
Hsu, Ted	Kingston and the Islands	Lib.
Hughes, Carol	Algoma—Manitoulin—Kapuskasing	NDP
Hyer, Bruce	Thunder Bay—Superior North	NDP



Name of Member	Constituency	Political Affiliation
James, Roxanne	Scarborough Centre	CPC
Karygiannis, Hon. Jim	Scarborough—Agincourt	Lib.
Kellway, Matthew	Beaches—East York	NDP
Kent, Hon. Peter, Minister of the Environment	Thornhill	CPC
Kramp, Daryl	Prince Edward—Hastings	CPC
Lauson, Guy	Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry	CPC
Leitch, Kellie, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Human Resources and Skills Development and to the Minister of Labour	Simcoe—Grey	CPC
Lemieux, Pierre, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Agriculture	Glengarry—Prescott—Russell	CPC
Leung, Chungsen, Parliamentary Secretary for Multiculturalism	Willowdale	CPC
Lizon, Wladyslaw	Mississauga East—Cooksville	CPC
Lobb, Ben	Huron—Bruce	CPC
MacKenzie, Dave	Oxford	CPC
Marston, Wayne	Hamilton East—Stoney Creek	NDP
Masse, Brian	Windsor West	NDP
Mathysen, Irene	London—Fanshawe	NDP
McCallum, Hon. John	Markham—Unionville	Lib.
McColeman, Phil	Brant	CPC
McGuinty, David	Ottawa South	Lib.
McKay, Hon. John	Scarborough—Guildwood	Lib.
Menegakis, Costas	Richmond Hill	CPC
Miller, Larry	Bruce—Grey—Owen Sound	CPC
Nash, Peggy	Parkdale—High Park	NDP
Nicholson, Hon. Rob, Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada	Niagara Falls	CPC
Norlock, Rick	Northumberland—Quinte West	CPC
O'Connor, Hon. Gordon, Minister of State and Chief Government Whip	Carleton—Mississippi Mills	CPC
Oda, Hon. Bev, Minister of International Cooperation	Durham	CPC
Oliver, Hon. Joe, Minister of Natural Resources	Eglinton—Lawrence	CPC
Opitz, Ted	Etobicoke Centre	CPC
Poilievre, Pierre, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Transport, Infrastructure and Communities and for the Federal Economic Development Agency for Southern Ontario	Nepean—Carleton	CPC
Preston, Joe	Elgin—Middlesex—London	CPC
Rae, Hon. Bob	Toronto Centre	Lib.
Rafferty, John	Thunder Bay—Rainy River	NDP
Raitt, Hon. Lisa, Minister of Labour	Halton	CPC
Reid, Scott	Lanark—Frontenac—Lennox and Addington	CPC
Rickford, Greg, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development, for the Canadian Northern Economic Development Agency and for the Federal Economic Development Initiative for Northern Ontario	Kenora	CPC
Schellenberger, Gary	Perth—Wellington	CPC
Seeback, Kyle	Brampton West	CPC
Sgro, Hon. Judy	York West	Lib.
Shipley, Bev	Lambton—Kent—Middlesex	CPC
Sitsabaiesan, Rathika	Scarborough—Rouge River	NDP
Stanton, Bruce, The Acting Speaker	Simcoe North	CPC
Sullivan, Mike	York South—Weston	NDP
Sweet, David	Ancaster—Dundas—Flamborough—Westdale	CPC
Thibeault, Glenn	Sudbury	NDP

Name of Member	Constituency	Political Affiliation
Tilson, David .....	Dufferin—Caledon .....	CPC
Trottier, Bernard .....	Etobicoke—Lakeshore .....	CPC
Truppe, Susan, Parliamentary Secretary for Status of Women .....	London North Centre .....	CPC
Valeriote, Frank .....	Guelph .....	Lib.
Van Kesteren, Dave .....	Chatham-Kent—Essex .....	CPC
Van Loan, Hon. Peter, Leader of the Government in the House of Commons .....	York—Simcoe .....	CPC
Wallace, Mike .....	Burlington .....	CPC
Watson, Jeff .....	Essex .....	CPC
Woodworth, Stephen .....	Kitchener Centre .....	CPC
Young, Terence .....	Oakville .....	CPC
VACANCY .....	Toronto—Danforth .....	

#### PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND (4)

Casey, Sean .....	Charlottetown .....	Lib.
Easter, Hon. Wayne .....	Malpeque .....	Lib.
MacAulay, Hon. Lawrence .....	Cardigan .....	Lib.
Shea, Hon. Gail, Minister of National Revenue .....	Egmont .....	CPC

#### QUÉBEC (75)

Aubin, Robert .....	Trois-Rivières .....	NDP
Ayala, Paulina .....	Honoré-Mercier .....	NDP
Bellavance, André .....	Richmond—Arthabaska .....	BQ
Benskin, Tyrone .....	Jeanne-Le Ber .....	NDP
Bernier, Hon. Maxime, Minister of State (Small Business and Tourism) .....	Beauce .....	CPC
Blanchette, Denis .....	Louis-Hébert .....	NDP
Blanchette-Lamothe, Lysane .....	Pierrefonds—Dollard .....	NDP
Blaney, Hon. Steven, Minister of Veterans Affairs .....	Lévis—Bellechasse .....	CPC
Boivin, Françoise .....	Gatineau .....	NDP
Borg, Charmaine .....	Terrebonne—Blainville .....	NDP
Boulerice, Alexandre .....	Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie .....	NDP
Boutin-Sweet, Marjolaine .....	Hochelaga .....	NDP
Brahmi, Tarik .....	Saint-Jean .....	NDP
Brosseau, Ruth Ellen .....	Berthier—Maskinongé .....	NDP
Caron, Guy .....	Rimouski-Neigette—Témiscouata—Les Basques .....	NDP
Chicoine, Sylvain .....	Châteauguay—Saint-Constant .....	NDP
Choquette, François .....	Drummond .....	NDP
Coderre, Hon. Denis .....	Bourassa .....	Lib.
Côté, Raymond .....	Beauport—Limoilou .....	NDP
Cotler, Hon. Irwin .....	Mount Royal .....	Lib.
Day, Anne-Marie .....	Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles .....	NDP
Dion, Hon. Stéphane, Saint-Laurent—Cartierville .....	Saint-Laurent—Cartierville .....	Lib.
Dionne Labelle, Pierre .....	Rivière-du-Nord .....	NDP
Doré Lefebvre, Rosane .....	Alfred-Pellan .....	NDP
Dubé, Matthew .....	Chambly—Borduas .....	NDP
Dusseau, Pierre-Luc .....	Sherbrooke .....	NDP
Fortin, Jean-François .....	Haute-Gaspésie—La Mitis—Matane—Matapédia .....	BQ
Freeman, Mylène .....	Argenteuil—Papineau—Mirabel .....	NDP



Name of Member	Constituency	Political Affiliation
Garneau, Marc .....	Westmount—Ville-Marie .....	Lib.
Genest, Réjean .....	Shefford .....	NDP
Genest-Jourdain, Jonathan .....	Manicouagan .....	NDP
Giguère, Alain .....	Marc-Aurèle-Fortin .....	NDP
Gourde, Jacques, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Works and Government Services, for Official Languages and for the Economic Development Agency for the Regions of Quebec .....	Lotbinière—Chutes-de-la-Chaudière .....	CPC
Groguhé, Sadia .....	Saint-Lambert .....	NDP
Hassainia, Sana .....	Verchères—Les Patriotes .....	NDP
Jacob, Pierre .....	Brome—Missisquoi .....	NDP
Lapointe, François .....	Montmagny—L'Islet—Kamouraska— Rivière-du-Loup .....	NDP
Larose, Jean-François .....	Repentigny .....	NDP
Latendresse, Alexandrine .....	Louis-Saint-Laurent .....	NDP
Laverdière, Hélène .....	Laurier—Sainte-Marie .....	NDP
Lebel, Hon. Denis, Minister of Transport, Infrastructure and Communities and Minister of the Economic Development Agency of Canada for the Regions of Quebec .....	Roberval—Lac-Saint-Jean .....	CPC
LeBlanc, Hélène .....	LaSalle—Émard .....	NDP
Liu, Laurin .....	Rivière-des-Mille-Îles .....	NDP
Mai, Hoang .....	Brossard—La Prairie .....	NDP
Michaud, Éline .....	Portneuf—Jacques-Cartier .....	NDP
Moore, Christine .....	Abitibi—Témiscamingue .....	NDP
Morin, Dany .....	Chicoutimi—Le Fjord .....	NDP
Morin, Isabelle .....	Notre-Dame-de-Grâce—Lachine .....	NDP
Morin, Marc-André .....	Laurentides—Labelle .....	NDP
Morin, Marie-Claude .....	Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot .....	NDP
Mourani, Maria .....	Ahuntsic .....	BQ
Mulcair, Thomas .....	Outremont .....	NDP
Nantel, Pierre .....	Longueuil—Pierre-Boucher .....	NDP
Nicholls, Jamie .....	Vaudreuil-Soulanges .....	NDP
Nunez-Melo, José .....	Laval .....	NDP
Pacetti, Massimo .....	Saint-Léonard—Saint-Michel .....	Lib.
Papillon, Annick .....	Québec .....	NDP
Paradis, Hon. Christian, Minister of Industry and Minister of State (Agriculture) .....	Mégantic—L'Érable .....	CPC
Patry, Claude .....	Jonquière—Alma .....	NDP
Pécelet, Ève .....	La Pointe-de-l'Île .....	NDP
Perreault, Manon .....	Montcalm .....	NDP
Pilon, François .....	Laval—Les Îles .....	NDP
Plamondon, Louis .....	Bas-Richelieu—Nicolet—Bécancour .....	BQ
Quach, Anne Minh-Thu .....	Beauharnois—Salaberry .....	NDP
Ravignat, Mathieu .....	Pontiac .....	NDP
Raynault, Francine .....	Joliette .....	NDP
Rousseau, Jean .....	Compton—Stanstead .....	NDP
Saganash, Romeo .....	Abitibi—Baie-James—Nunavik—Eeyou .....	NDP
Scarpaleggia, Francis .....	Lac-Saint-Louis .....	Lib.
Sellah, Djaouida .....	Saint-Bruno—Saint-Hubert .....	NDP
St-Denis, Lise .....	Saint-Maurice—Champlain .....	NDP
Toone, Philip .....	Gaspésie—Îles-de-la-Madeleine .....	NDP
Tremblay, Jonathan .....	Montmorency—Charlevoix—Haute- Côte-Nord .....	NDP

Name of Member	Constituency	Political Affiliation
Trudeau, Justin .....	Papineau .....	Lib.
Turmel, Nycole .....	Hull—Aylmer .....	NDP

**SASKATCHEWAN (14)**

Anderson, David, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Natural Resources and for the Canadian Wheat Board .....	Cypress Hills—Grasslands .....	CPC
Block, Kelly .....	Saskatoon—Rosetown—Biggar .....	CPC
Boughen, Ray .....	Palliser .....	CPC
Breitkreuz, Garry .....	Yorkton—Melville .....	CPC
Clarke, Rob .....	Desnethé—Missinippi—Churchill River .....	CPC
Goodale, Hon. Ralph .....	Wascana .....	Lib.
Hoback, Randy .....	Prince Albert .....	CPC
Komarnicki, Ed .....	Souris—Moose Mountain .....	CPC
Lukiwski, Tom, Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons .....	Regina—Lumsden—Lake Centre .....	CPC
Ritz, Hon. Gerry, Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food and Minister for the Canadian Wheat Board .....	Battlefords—Lloydminster .....	CPC
Scheer, Hon. Andrew, Speaker of the House of Commons .....	Regina—Qu'Appelle .....	CPC
Trost, Brad .....	Saskatoon—Humboldt .....	CPC
Vellacott, Maurice .....	Saskatoon—Wanuskewin .....	CPC
Yelich, Hon. Lynne, Minister of State (Western Economic Diversification) .....	Blackstrap .....	CPC

**YUKON (1)**

Leef, Ryan .....	Yukon .....	CPC
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# LIST OF STANDING AND SUB-COMMITTEES

(As of October 7, 2011 — 1st Session, 41st Parliament)

## ABORIGINAL AFFAIRS AND NORTHERN DEVELOPMENT

### Chair:

Chris Warkentin

### Vice-Chairs:

Carolyn Bennett  
Dennis Bevington

Ray Boughen  
Rob Clarke  
Linda Duncan

Jonathan Genest-Jourdain  
LaVar Payne

John Rafferty  
Greg Rickford

Kyle Seeback  
David Wilks

(12)

### Associate Members

Eve Adams  
Mark Adler  
Dan Albas  
Harold Albrecht  
Chris Alexander  
Mike Allen  
Dean Allison  
Stella Ambler  
Rob Anders  
David Anderson  
Charlie Angus  
Scott Armstrong  
Niki Ashton  
Jay Aspin  
Joyce Bateman  
Leon Benoit  
James Bezan  
Kelly Block  
Peter Braid  
Garry Breitkreuz  
Gordon Brown  
Lois Brown  
Patrick Brown  
Rod Bruinooge  
Brad Butt  
Paul Calandra  
Blaine Calkins  
Ron Cannan  
John Carmichael  
Colin Carrie  
Corneliu Chisu  
Michael Chong  
Jean Crowder

Nathan Cullen  
Joe Daniel  
Patricia Davidson  
Bob Dechert  
Dean Del Mastro  
Earl Dreeshen  
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Kerry-Lynne D. Findlay  
Hedy Fry  
Royal Galipeau  
Cheryl Gallant  
Parm Gill  
Shelly Glover  
Robert Goguen  
Peter Goldring  
Jacques Gourde  
Nina Grewal  
Richard Harris  
Laurie Hawn  
Bryan Hayes  
Russ Hiebert  
Jim Hillyer  
Randy Hoback  
Candice Hoeppner  
Ed Holder  
Bruce Hyer  
Roxanne James  
Brian Jean  
Peter Julian  
Randy Kamp  
Gerald Keddy  
Greg Kerr

Ed Komarnicki  
Daryl Kramp  
Mike Lake  
Kevin Lamoureux  
Guy Lauzon  
Ryan Leef  
Kellie Leitch  
Pierre Lemieux  
Chungsen Leung  
Wladyslaw Lizon  
Ben Lobb  
Tom Lukiwski  
James Lunney  
Dave MacKenzie  
Colin Mayes  
Phil McColeman  
Cathy McLeod  
Costas Menegakis  
Rob Merrifield  
Larry Miller  
Christine Moore  
Rob Moore  
Rick Norlock  
Tilly O'Neill Gordon  
Deepak Obhrai  
Ted Opitz  
Pierre Poilievre  
Joe Preston  
James Rajotte  
Brent Rathgeber  
Mathieu Ravignat  
Scott Reid

Michelle Rempel  
Blake Richards  
Lee Richardson  
Romeo Saganash  
Andrew Saxton  
Gary Schellenberger  
Bev Shipley  
Devinder Shory  
Joy Smith  
Robert Sopuck  
Kevin Sorenson  
Brian Storseth  
Mark Strahl  
David Sweet  
David Tilson  
Lawrence Toet  
Brad Trost  
Bernard Trotter  
Susan Truppe  
Merv Tweed  
Dave Van Kesteren  
Maurice Vellacott  
Mike Wallace  
Mark Warawa  
Jeff Watson  
John Weston  
Rodney Weston  
John Williamson  
Stephen Woodworth  
Terence Young  
Wai Young  
Bob Zimmer

## ACCESS TO INFORMATION, PRIVACY AND ETHICS

**Chair:** Jean Crowder

**Vice-Chairs:**

Scott Andrews  
Patricia Davidson

Charlie Angus  
Ruth Ellen Brosseau  
Brad Butt

Blaine Calkins  
John Carmichael

Dean Del Mastro  
Earl Dreesen

Pierre-Luc Dusseault  
Colin Mayes

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### Associate Members

Eve Adams  
Mark Adler  
Dan Albas  
Harold Albrecht  
Chris Alexander  
Mike Allen  
Dean Allison  
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Rob Anders  
David Anderson  
Scott Armstrong  
Jay Aspin  
Joyce Bateman  
Carolyn Bennett  
Leon Benoit  
James Bezan  
Kelly Block  
Ray Boughen  
Peter Braid  
Garry Breitzkreuz  
Gordon Brown  
Lois Brown  
Patrick Brown  
Rod Bruinooge  
Paul Calandra  
Ron Cannan  
Colin Carrie  
Corneliu Chisu  
Michael Chong  
Rob Clarke  
Joe Comartin

Joe Daniel  
Bob Dechert  
Rick Dykstra  
Wayne Easter  
Kerry-Lynne D. Findlay  
Royal Galipeau  
Cheryl Gallant  
Parm Gill  
Shelly Glover  
Robert Goguen  
Peter Goldring  
Jacques Gourde  
Nina Grewal  
Richard Harris  
Laurie Hawn  
Bryan Hayes  
Jim Hillyer  
Randy Hoback  
Candice Hoepfner  
Ed Holder  
Roxanne James  
Brian Jean  
Peter Julian  
Randy Kamp  
Gerald Keddy  
Greg Kerr  
Ed Komarnicki  
Daryl Kramp  
Mike Lake  
Guy Lauzon  
Ryan Leef

Kellie Leitch  
Pierre Lemieux  
Chungsen Leung  
Wladyslaw Lizon  
Ben Lobb  
Tom Lukiwski  
James Lunney  
Dave MacKenzie  
Pat Martin  
Phil McColeman  
Cathy McLeod  
Costas Menegakis  
Rob Merrifield  
Larry Miller  
Rob Moore  
Rick Norlock  
Tilly O'Neill Gordon  
Deepak Obhrai  
Ted Opitz  
LaVar Payne  
Pierre Poilievre  
Joe Preston  
James Rajotte  
Brent Rathgeber  
Scott Reid  
Michelle Rempel  
Blake Richards  
Lee Richardson  
Greg Rickford  
Andrew Saxton

Gary Schellenberger  
Kyle Seebach  
Bev Shipley  
Devinder Shory  
Joy Smith  
Robert Sopuck  
Kevin Sorenson  
Brian Storseth  
Mark Strahl  
David Sweet  
David Tilson  
Lawrence Toet  
Brad Trost  
Bernard Trotter  
Susan Truppe  
Merv Tweed  
Dave Van Kesteren  
Maurice Vellacott  
Mike Wallace  
Mark Warawa  
Chris Warkentin  
Jeff Watson  
John Weston  
Rodney Weston  
David Wilks  
John Williamson  
Stephen Woodworth  
Terence Young  
Wai Young  
Bob Zimmer



## AGRICULTURE AND AGRI-FOOD

**Chair:**

Larry Miller

**Vice-Chairs:**

Malcolm Allen

Frank Valeriotte

Alex Atamanenko  
Randy Hoback  
Pierre Lemieux

Ben Lobb  
LaVar Payne

Francine Raynault  
Jean Rousseau

Brian Storseth  
Bob Zimmer

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### Associate Members

Eve Adams  
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Harold Albrecht  
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Dean Allison  
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David Anderson  
Scott Armstrong  
Jay Aspin  
Joyce Bateman  
Leon Benoit  
James Bezan  
Kelly Block  
Ray Boughen  
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Gordon Brown  
Lois Brown  
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Paul Calandra  
Blaine Calkins  
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Corneliu Chisu  
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Bob Dechert  
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Wayne Easter  
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Mylène Freeman  
Hedy Fry  
Royal Galipeau  
Cheryl Gallant  
Parm Gill  
Shelly Glover  
Robert Goguen  
Peter Goldring  
Jacques Gourde  
Nina Grewal  
Richard Harris  
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Bryan Hayes  
Russ Hiebert  
Jim Hillyer  
Candice Hoepfner  
Ed Holder  
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Greg Kerr  
Ed Komarnicki  
Daryl Kramp  
Mike Lake  
Guy Lauzon  
Ryan Leef  
Kellie Leitch  
Chungsen Leung  
Wladyslaw Lizon  
Tom Lukiwski  
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Rob Merrifield  
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Kevin Sorenson  
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David Sweet  
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Lawrence Toet  
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Bernard Trotter  
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Mike Wallace  
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David Wilks  
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## CANADIAN HERITAGE

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Tyrone Benskin  
Marjolaine Boutin-SweetGordon Brown  
Paul CalandraAndrew Cash  
Parm GillJim Hillyer  
Terence Young

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Harold Albrecht  
Chris Alexander  
Mike Allen  
Dean Allison  
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Rob Anders  
David Anderson  
Charlie Angus  
Jay Aspin  
Joyce Bateman  
Mauril Bélanger  
Leon Benoit  
James Bezan  
Kelly Block  
Ray Boughen  
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Garry Breitkreuz  
Lois Brown  
Patrick Brown  
Rod Bruinooge  
Brad Butt  
Blaine Calkins  
Ron Cannan  
John Carmichael  
Colin Carrie  
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Michael Chong  
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Cheryl Gallant  
Shelly Glover  
Robert Goguen  
Peter Goldring  
Jacques Gourde  
Nina Grewal  
Richard Harris  
Laurie Hawn  
Bryan Hayes  
Russ Hiebert  
Randy Hoback  
Candice Hoepfner  
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Peter Julian  
Randy Kamp  
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Pierre Lemieux  
Chungsen Leung  
Wladyslaw Lizon  
Ben Lobb  
Tom Lukiwski  
James Lunney  
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Ted Opitz  
LaVar Payne  
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Lee Richardson  
Greg RickfordAndrew Saxton  
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Justin Trudeau  
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## CITIZENSHIP AND IMMIGRATION

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David Tilson

**Vice-Chair:**

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Don Davies  
Rick Dykstra  
Sadia Groguhé

Roxanne James  
Matthew Kellway  
Chungsen Leung

Costas Menegakis  
Ted Opitz

Rathika Sitsabaiesan  
John Weston

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## ENVIRONMENT AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

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Michelle RempelRobert Sopuck  
Lise St-DenisLawrence Toet  
Stephen Woodworth

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Dennis Bevington  
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Peter Braid  
Garry Breitreuz  
Gordon Brown  
Lois Brown  
Patrick Brown  
Rod Bruinooge  
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Gerald Keddy  
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Guy Lauzon  
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Chungsen Leung  
Wladyslaw Lizon  
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Phil McColeman  
Cathy McLeod  
Costas Menegakis  
Rob Merrifield  
Larry Miller  
Rob Moore  
Joyce Murray  
Rick Norlock  
Tilly O'Neill Gordon  
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Ted Opitz  
LaVar Payne  
Pierre Poilievre  
Joe Preston  
James Rajotte  
Brent Rathgeber  
Scott Reid  
Blake RichardsLee Richardson  
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Andrew Saxton  
Francis Scarpaleggia  
Gary Schellenberger  
Kyle Seeback  
Bev Shipley  
Devinder Shory  
Jinny Jogindera Sims  
Joy Smith  
Kevin Sorenson  
Brian Storseth  
Mark Strahl  
David Sweet  
David Tilton  
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## FINANCE

**Chair:**

James Rajotte

**Vice-Chairs:**

 Scott Brison  
Hoang Mai

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Shelly Glover

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Brian Jean

 Wayne Marston  
Cathy McLeod

 Peggy Nash  
Dave Van Kesteren

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Jay Aspin  
Joyce Bateman  
Leon Benoit  
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Kelly Block  
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Tarik Brahmi  
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Ron Cannan  
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Patricia Davidson  
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Gerald Keddy  
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Daryl Kramp  
Mike Lake  
Guy Lauzon  
Ryan Leef

 Kellie Leitch  
Pierre Lemieux  
Chungsen Leung  
Wladyslaw Lizon  
Ben Lobb  
Tom Lukiwski  
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Deepak Obhrai  
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Massimo Pacetti  
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Pierre Poilievre  
Joe Preston  
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Scott Reid  
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Lee Richardson  
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Andrew Saxton  
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Jinny Jogindera Sims  
Joy Smith  
Robert Sopuck  
Kevin Sorenson  
Brian Storseth  
Mark Strahl  
David Sweet  
Glenn Thibeault  
David Tilson  
Lawrence Toet  
Brad Trost  
Bernard Trotter  
Susan Truppe  
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Mike Wallace  
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Chris Warkentin  
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Rodney Weston

**Vice-Chairs:**

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Rosane Doré Lefebvre  
 Bryan Hayes

Randy Kamp  
 Ryan Leef

Robert Sopuck  
 Jonathan Tremblay

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**Associate Members**

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 Dan Albas  
 Harold Albrecht  
 Chris Alexander  
 Dean Allison  
 Stella Ambler  
 Rob Anders  
 David Anderson  
 Scott Armstrong  
 Jay Aspin  
 Joyce Bateman  
 Leon Benoit  
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 Kelly Block  
 Ray Boughen  
 Peter Braid  
 Garry Breitreuz  
 Gordon Brown  
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 Rod Bruinooge  
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 Paul Calandra  
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 Joe Daniel  
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 Earl Dreeshen  
 Rick Dykstra  
 Kerry-Lynne D. Findlay  
 Royal Galipeau  
 Cheryl Gallant  
 Parm Gill  
 Shelly Glover  
 Yvon Godin  
 Robert Goguen  
 Peter Goldring  
 Jacques Gourde  
 Nina Grewal  
 Richard Harris  
 Laurie Hawn  
 Russ Hiebert  
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 Randy Hoback  
 Candice Hoepfner  
 Ed Holder  
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 Brian Jean  
 Peter Julian  
 Gerald Keddy  
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Guy Lauzon  
 Kellie Leitch  
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 Chungsen Leung  
 Wladyslaw Lizon  
 Ben Lobb  
 Tom Lukiwski  
 James Lunney  
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 Phil McColeman  
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 Costas Menegakis  
 Rob Merrifield  
 Larry Miller  
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 Joyce Murray  
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 Deepak Obhrai  
 Ted Opitz  
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 Joe Preston  
 James Rajotte  
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 Scott Reid  
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 Blake Richards  
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Andrew Saxton  
 Gary Schellenberger  
 Kyle Seeback  
 Bev Shipley  
 Devinder Shory  
 Joy Smith  
 Kevin Sorenson  
 Peter Stoffer  
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 Mark Strahl  
 David Sweet  
 David Tilson  
 Lawrence Toet  
 Philip Toone  
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 Susan Truppe  
 Merv Tweed  
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 Maurice Vellacott  
 Mike Wallace  
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## FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

**Chair:**

Dean Allison

**Vice-Chairs:**Hélène Laverdière  
Dominic LeBlanc

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Lois Brown	Nina Grewal	Gary Schellenberger	Dave Van Kesteren	
Bob Dechert				

### Associate Members

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Mark Adler	Dean Del Mastro	Chungsen Leung	Greg Rickford
Dan Albas	Earl Dreesen	Wladyslaw Lizon	Andrew Saxton
Harold Albrecht	Rick Dykstra	Ben Lobb	Kyle Seeback
Chris Alexander	Mark Eyking	Tom Lukiwski	Bev Shipley
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Stella Ambler	Royal Galipeau	Dave MacKenzie	Joy Smith
Rob Anders	Cheryl Gallant	Wayne Marston	Robert Sopuck
David Anderson	Parm Gill	Brian Masse	Kevin Sorenson
Scott Armstrong	Shelly Glover	Colin Mayes	Brian Storseth
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Ray Boughen	Russ Hiebert	Larry Miller	Bernard Trottier
Peter Braid	Jim Hillyer	Rob Moore	Susan Truppe
Garry Breitzkreuz	Randy Hoback	Rick Norlock	Merv Tweed
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Patrick Brown	Ed Holder	Deepak Obhrai	Mike Wallace
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Michael Chong	Mike Lake	Scott Reid	Terence Young
Rob Clarke	Guy Lauzon	Michelle Rempel	Wai Young
Irwin Cotler	Ryan Leef	Blake Richards	Bob Zimmer
Joe Daniel	Kellie Leitch		

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Irwin Cotler	Russ Hiebert	Ève Péclet	David Sweet	(7)
Nina Grewal	Wayne Marston	Scott Reid		

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Pat Martin

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Denis Blanchette  
Kelly BlockAlexandre Boulerice  
Peter BraidRon Cannan  
Jacques GourdeMathieu Ravignat  
Bernard Trottier

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Ray Boughen  
Garry Breitkreuz  
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## HEALTH

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Kelly Block  
Patrick Brown  
Colin Carrie

Parm Gill  
Dany Morin

Anne Minh-Thu Quach  
Djaouida Sellah

Mark Strahl  
John Williamson

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Mike Sullivan  
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David Tilson  
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Mike Wallace  
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Rodney Weston  
David Wilks  
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Bob Zimmer

## HUMAN RESOURCES, SKILLS AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT AND THE STATUS OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

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Jean Crowder  
Joe Daniel

Kellie Leitch  
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Phil McColeman  
Claude Patry

Manon Perreault  
Devinder Shory

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### **The Deputy Chair of Committees of the Whole**

MR. BARRY DEVOLIN

### **The Assistant Deputy Chair of Committees of the Whole**

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Hon. Vic Toews	Minister of Public Safety
Hon. Rona Ambrose	Minister of Public Works and Government Services and Minister for Status of Women
Hon. Diane Finley	Minister of Human Resources and Skills Development
Hon. Bev Oda	Minister of International Cooperation
Hon. John Baird	Minister of Foreign Affairs
Hon. Tony Clement	President of the Treasury Board and Minister for the Federal Economic Development Initiative for Northern Ontario
Hon. Jim Flaherty	Minister of Finance
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Hon. Jason Kenney	Minister of Citizenship, Immigration and Multiculturalism
Hon. Gerry Ritz	Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food and Minister for the Canadian Wheat Board
Hon. Christian Paradis	Minister of Industry and Minister of State (Agriculture)
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Hon. Denis Lebel	Minister of Transport, Infrastructure and Communities and Minister of the Economic Development Agency of Canada for the Regions of Quebec
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Hon. Steven Fletcher	Minister of State (Transport)
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Mr. Robert Goguen	to the Minister of Justice
Mr. Chris Alexander	to the Minister of National Defence
Ms. Candice Hoepfner	to the Minister of Public Safety
Mr. Jacques Gourde	to the Minister of Public Works and Government Services, for Official Languages and for the Economic Development Agency for the Regions of Quebec
Mrs. Susan Truppe	for Status of Women
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Mr. Deepak Obhrai	to the Minister of Foreign Affairs
Mr. Bob Dechert	to the Minister of Foreign Affairs
Mr. Andrew Saxton	to the President of the Treasury Board and for Western Economic Diversification
Mrs. Shelly Glover	to the Minister of Finance
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Mr. Chungsen Leung	for Multiculturalism
Mr. Pierre Lemieux	to the Minister of Agriculture
Mr. Mike Lake	to the Minister of Industry
Mr. Paul Calandra	to the Minister of Canadian Heritage
Mr. Pierre Poilievre	to the Minister of Transport, Infrastructure and Communities and for the Federal Economic Development Agency for Southern Ontario
Mr. Colin Carrie	to the Minister of Health
Mr. Randy Kamp	to the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans and for the Asia-Pacific Gateway
Ms. Michelle Rempel	to the Minister of the Environment
Mrs. Cathy McLeod	to the Minister of National Revenue
Mr. Greg Rickford	to the Minister of Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development, for the Canadian Northern Economic Development Agency and for the Federal Economic Development Initiative for Northern Ontario
Ms. Eve Adams	to the Minister of Veterans Affairs
Mr. Gerald Keddy	to the Minister of International Trade, for the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency and for the Atlantic Gateway
Mr. David Anderson	to the Minister of Natural Resources and for the Canadian Wheat Board



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HOUSE OF COMMONS  
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# House of Commons Debates

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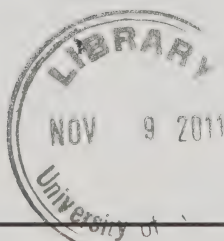
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OFFICIAL REPORT  
(HANSARD)

**Monday, October 17, 2011**

Speaker: The Honourable Andrew Scheer



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# HOUSE OF COMMONS

Monday, October 17, 2011

The House met at 11 a.m.

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*Prayers*

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## GOVERNMENT ORDERS

● (1105)

[English]

### KEEPING CANADA'S ECONOMY AND JOBS GROWING ACT

The House resumed from October 7 consideration of the motion that Bill C-13, An Act to implement certain provisions of the 2011 budget as updated on June 6, 2011 and other measures, be read the second time and referred to a committee.

**Ms. Megan Leslie (Halifax, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to speak to Bill C-13 today. I will start by taking about what Bill C-13 should be doing and what we should be doing with any budget bill in 2011. The most recent economic slowdown has made it clear that policy makers and legislators, we in this chamber, have some really important decisions to make to ensure that Canada has an economy that is healthy and responsive to not only the realities of 2011 but also beyond that. This budget is not just about today or next week; it is about Canada's economic future.

The decisions that we are about to make are, in reality, an opportunity to establish an economy of the future for Canada. It could be a green economy. It could be an innovative-based economy. It could be a knowledge-based economy. It is such a gift that we actually get the chance to think about the future and about the direction toward which we want to bring Canada.

I would like to see an economy that is based on green technologies and renewable energy, for example, not fossil fuels. I would like to see an economy where students would not come out of school graduating with crushing student debt, but would have a chance to start work right away, to contribute and invest in their local communities. I would like to see an economy of the future where older workers are supported to transition into new work as industries evolve. I would also like to see an economy where we realize that it costs less to eradicate poverty than it does to pay for the negative effects that poverty has on our system as a whole, in particular our health system and our social security system.

We need to invigorate productivity in the country and we need to promote research and development. I have been working on this in

the riding of Halifax. As members probably know, Halifax is an emerging knowledge-based economy. We understand that an innovation and knowledge-based economy will give Canada the flexibility it needs to help the country weather economic ups and downs in a global economy.

I think a paper came out this weekend for the Institute for Research on Public Policy. It said that we needed a renewed research and development strategy, one that stressed the fact that innovation was a key component to the future of our economy.

A report from the Mowat Centre for Policy Innovation points out that there are successful and productive systems in countries considered innovation leaders where targeted grants are used instead of just tax breaks. This makes really good sense because Canada has an innovation problem. This has been noted internationally. One way we can help our entrepreneurs, our knowledge thinkers and innovators get a leg up is by having very targeted incentives to reward innovation, to reward solid R and D plans and to reward commercialization of innovation. This is an area where we are lacking. It is not the money per se. We are doing okay when we look at other countries and when we look at what and how much the government is investing. The problem is the lack of strategy. The government is investing in blanket tax cuts and not saying in what direction we should be going.

For example, Halifax has so many PhDs in oceans research. It is really a hub of oceans research and innovation around oceans and marine technology, but we do not have a real strategy to build and develop that. Luckily, we have some incredibly innovative thinkers and civic entrepreneurs who have taken it upon themselves to bring the Bedford Institute of Oceanography together with Dalhousie, the National Research Council and Bionova and facilitate a hub development in Halifax around oceans and marine research.

*Government Orders*

A lot of that had to do with one person, the vice-president of research and development at Dalhousie, Martha Crago, who said recognized that the people were there and suggested they get together and have coffee. Believe it or not, having a cup of coffee with innovators and entrepreneurs can do a lot to come up with good ideas and strategies for the future that will catapult us toward an innovation and knowledge-based economy.

I point out that the Conservatives do not seem to want to do any of this. They are sticking to their own outdated policies, their pretty ideological policies. It is all about tax cuts. It is not about thinking strategically. This way of thinking is contrary to many of Canada's leading thinkers on this issue.

The government is also ignoring what history and current statistics have taught us; that is tax breaks do not necessarily lead to greater investment by companies in research, innovation or in capital and that improving the conditions for productivity through investment, infrastructure and research is often much more responsive and effective.

However, are we really surprised by that? If we think about recent history, in 2008 the Conservative government was dragged kicking and screaming toward the realization that we actually had an economic crisis. If it were not that the NDP and opposition parties were relentless in telling the Conservatives to wake up and recognize that we were in an economic crisis, pointing it out and showing that there was a way we could get out of this, we would not have even had the stimulus package that was brought forward. We are grateful there was some recognition that we needed a stimulus package, but it lacked that vision for critical investment. It was about policies to give tax cuts and not targeted investments.

Three years later the New Democrats are still focused on addressing the real priorities of Canadian families. We know what those are: jobs, health care, pensions and helping seniors in need. On May 2, Canadians voted for change. This budget is a fantastic opportunity to recognize that and to have that vision for change.

The government should be looking at ways to make life affordable for people. We could look at ways to do the "belt tightening", but we could invest targeted moneys that would help us save money, for example, and I have talked about it in the House before, pharmacare. Imagine if we had a program that would take a very small amount of initial investment that would save Canadians and the government possibly billions of dollars.

We are one of the few G20 countries in the world that is not negotiating prices for drugs. We just pay whatever the drug companies want us to pay and say that is fine. That makes no sense. The Conservatives purport to be great business leaders. Why are they not at least saying that they will negotiate, because company A has a better price than company B.

Bulk purchasing is a very small step that we could take. We see it happening in individual provinces, like Nova Scotia, and they are saving buckets of money. Why would we not look at programs like pharmacare that could bring down the expenses for government and Canadians, make life more affordable and provide a framework like this?

• (1110)

**Mr. Phil McColeman (Brant, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the member alluded to the fact that in the stimulus package brought in by our government there were no targeted investments.

In my community, Wilfred Laurier University had a research and academic centre built, which is very targeted toward the very things the hon. member talks about, and those are technology, innovation and being world leaders. It is extremely targeted to our community because it is a satellite campus that is growing by leaps and bounds. It gives the stimulus for more economic activity around the knowledge economy in my community.

This happened, not only in my community, but there were 13,000 projects across the country, which the member's party voted against. In her opinion was that not targeted?

**Ms. Megan Leslie:** Mr. Speaker, I am glad the member was listening. Yes, that is targeted when it comes to a particular community or building, but not in thinking strategically about a future in where we are going with all of this. I will give an example.

In the north we have an incredible research facility north of the Arctic Circle, just about at the North Pole. It does incredible work on climate and predicting weather patterns. It is a top-notch, state-of-the-art, beautiful facility, but no one is there. It is empty. We built it, but there are no scientists or researchers there because we are not continuing to fund the thinkers. We are not continuing to fund the innovators so they can actually use the equipment that is there and work toward a better future for Canada.

• (1115)

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the Liberal Party has talked a great deal on the priority of this session, which is jobs, jobs and jobs. The government has fallen short in coming up with innovative ideas that would materialize those real jobs necessary in our community.

My question for my colleague is with regard to housing programs and investing in programs that would improve our housing stocks across the country, particularly in some of our urban centres where there is a need for that. Does she see a benefit in having a home renovation program put in to place on an annual basis? I believe this would guarantee good solid jobs within an industry that is in need, especially when we look at the importance of housing across the country.

**Ms. Megan Leslie:** Mr. Speaker, my colleague is right to point out what investing in housing could do for people.



*Government Orders*

I held a press conference in an empty lot in Halifax to talk about the fact that the lot was slated for affordable housing development. I had members from the construction trade unions with me who said that these were jobs, that they were ready to build and that they had the expertise. A fantastic woman, who does home retrofits, talked about the impact of building energy efficient housing and how it could help our environment and reduce greenhouse gas emissions. We also had folks from the low-income community saying that if it was built, they would have housing.

What is the solution to the housing crisis? It is building houses. It is a win, win, win.

[Translation]

**Mr. Hoang Mai (Brossard—La Prairie, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for her speech.

I have a question for her about the government's lack of vision. She said that the government's budget was lacking vision. What suggestions does my colleague have for turning our economy into a green economy, as she said?

[English]

**Ms. Megan Leslie:** Mr. Speaker, I know the Conservatives do not like the word "strategy". I know they do not like the word "plan". However, that is what we need. We need a strategy and we need to think about how we move forward. I see no plan. It is just willy-nilly and it will not help us in the future.

As I said at the beginning of my speech, it is not about this week or next week. It is about the future of our economy and we need strategy.

**Mr. LaVar Payne (Medicine Hat, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I am honoured to have the opportunity to address the House on this issue. As this is the first time I have been able to formally stand in the House since my election in May, I hope the House will indulge me for a few moments for some brief comments.

First, I want to thank all those constituents who had confidence in me and voted for me to return to Ottawa as their representative to our federal government. It is an honour and a privilege to be returned to Ottawa as the member of Parliament for the great riding of Medicine Hat, and I am humbled by the opportunity and the overwhelming support I received from constituents from Bassano to Brooks, Barnwell to Taber, Vauxhall to Scandia to Rosemary, Bow Island to Foremost, Elkwater to Irvine, Redcliff to Medicine Hat, and all those exceptional communities in between.

I especially want to recognize some individuals who volunteered and worked so hard giving their time and energy to re-elect me under the excellent direction of my campaign manager, Dan Hein and his wife Pat, and all their tireless work. Our sign coordinator, Bob DesRosiers; official agent, Dale Stein; our office staff managed by Judy and Earl Morris; and the many enthusiastic volunteers and friends without whom the campaign would have been much more difficult. I thank each and every one of them.

I also thank my children and grandchildren for their encouragement. Most of all, I thank my life partner, my wife, Micheline. Without her support I would not have been able to carry on the rigorous campaign or to continue the extremely important role as a member of Parliament. I promise that I will do my utmost to ensure

that their concerns are heard here in Ottawa. They deserve nothing less. Not only did they show wise judgment and character in re-electing me, but also by helping send a strong, stable, national, majority Conservative government to Ottawa they were sending a clear message to all Canadians. The people of the Medicine Hat constituency wanted a party with a solid grip on the economy and the only party with the experience to push the agenda through. Our government has shown that it cares about communities and ridings like my own.

We are assembled here today to discuss an important bill, the budget implementation act. It would create jobs and growth, which, of course, is a key part of our plan. As members know, the heart of our plan builds on five years of work that has already been completed by our government. We will continue to deliver on our low tax agenda. We will continue to support a highly-skilled, innovative workforce, which is key to growing our economy and ensuring that we will remain in the top of the pack when it comes to job creation.

Although we have made much progress in ensuring Canada has stayed strong during the global economic downturn, we have much more to do to ensure that we are well equipped to resist future economic pressures.

It is important to note that we have had seven straight quarters of economic growth since 2009. Our government's progressive economic policies have led to the creation of at least 600,000 jobs as well.

We have made it the foundation of our government's plan to support Canadian families. We have delivered numerous tax credits to families and individuals. Families now pay, on average, \$3,000 less in taxes than they did before we introduced our tax reduction in our government's economic action plan.

Our government has promised to deliver investments in education. Our plan is to invest millions of dollars in research and development.

Our plan also involves the hard-working taxpayer whose contributions allow us to make Canada a great nation. That is why we have committed to closing tax loopholes and resorting to other measures to ensure that taxpayers are getting the most bang for their bucks.

The President of the Treasury Board has also been given a mandate to find \$4 billion of savings by finding inefficiencies in all federal government departments.

We have done so much to promote job creation and economic growth. Our government has expanded tax support for clean energy generation to encourage green investments. We have extended the mineral exploration tax credit for flow-through share investors by one year to support Canada's mining sector.

### *Government Orders*

This government has simplified customs tariffs in order to facilitate trade and lower the administrative burden for businesses. We have extended for two years the accelerated capital cost allowance treatment for investments in manufacturing and processing machinery and equipment. This will allow manufacturing processing firms in my riding of Medicine Hat to improve production efficiency and further job creation opportunities.

• (1120)

We have eliminated the mandatory retirement age for federal regulated employees. We have also ordered the formation of the red tape reduction committee. We are supporting unemployed workers by strengthening the EI system so that newly unemployed Canadians can use their best 14 weeks for EI claims. A new hiring credit for small business has been initiated. This is a temporary, one-time credit of up to \$1,000 against a small firm's increase in its 2011 EI premiums over those paid in 2010. The new credit will help up to 525,000 employers defray the costs of additional hiring.

We are also supporting our young entrepreneurs by investing \$20 million to enable the Canadian Youth Business Foundation to continue to help young entrepreneurs succeed.

What do industry stakeholders say? Well, the Toronto Board of Trade said that it:

...welcomed new initiatives to spur small-business productivity and hiring, such as the Hiring Credit for Small Business. SMEs are the engines of job growth. Spurring productivity and employment growth among SMEs, as this Budget does, should help Canada's economic recovery.

As I mentioned before, we will continue to support families and communities across Canada, communities like my own in the Medicine Hat constituency. We will legislate a permanent annual investment of \$2 billion in the gas tax fund to provide predictable, long-term infrastructure funding for municipalities.

We will introduce a volunteer firefighter tax credit of up to \$3,000 for volunteer firefighters who bravely serve their communities. We will implement a new children's arts tax credit up to \$500 in eligible fees for programs associated with arts, cultural, recreational and development activities. We will implement a new family caregiver tax credit in an amount of \$2,000 for caregivers of loved ones with infirmities, including, for the first time, spouses, common-law partners and minor children.

Again, we have found support among industry stakeholders. The Federation of Canadian Municipalities said:

...budget [2011] delivered a vital commitment to cities and communities to develop a new, long-term federal infrastructure plan.

I will go back to our plan to support education, innovation and training. Our government has committed to forgiving debt for doctors and nurses who pledge to work in remote and underserved areas. The following is what the Canadian Medical Association had to say:

The initiative to address the shortage of primary care physicians recognizes the particular challenges of providing health care in rural and remote areas of the country.

I will now talk about the targeted initiative for older workers for which the budget adds \$50 million. In particular, this program was very successful and the working in successful employment, or WISE program, has been very successful in Medicine Hat. Actually, seven

out of ten individuals who took that program have already secured employment.

Some of my colleagues talked about the housing initiative. In the Medicine Hat riding, some \$741,000 has gone toward funding for housing. I also want to talk very briefly about the Medalta historic site in Medicine Hat. We received about \$3.4 million to help with the renovations and construction on this national historic site. That was in our budget from the historic society, as well as \$3 million from the community adjustment fund.

Those are just a few examples of what has happened under Canada's economic action plan. The people of the Medicine Hat constituency live in a more prosperous and productive economic environment. Our government has continued to support the communities in the riding of Medicine Hat and other communities right across this country.

The next phase of our economic action plan, contained in budget 2011, encompasses many ways of achieving this as we deliver our great country toward prosperity. There is no doubt that budget 2011 is worthy of support.

• (1125)

**Mr. Paul Dewar (Ottawa Centre, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I want to touch on what my colleague from Halifax had touched on in her presentation, which is the failure of the government to recognize the innovation agenda.

What we have seen in other jurisdictions is that just going down the tax credit route for R and D actually fails. We have corporations sitting on tons of cash and they are not investing. However, when we look at other jurisdictions, and I will reference Germany, there are no tax credits for R and D. It invests in the public sector and is doing much better.

I am wondering why the government continues to go down the path of corporate taxes without any strings to get those companies to invest when the Minister of Finance acknowledges that he cannot get them to invest. He is trying to encourage them but he does not have the policy framework. R and D is not working in this country because of failed policies.

Why is the government not looking at other jurisdictions, like Germany which has successfully invested in the public sector to get things moving for R and D?

**Mr. LaVar Payne:** Mr. Speaker, it is interesting to note that our government has invested more money in research and development than any other previous government.

**An hon. member:** The Grain Growers.

**Mr. LaVar Payne:** In particular, I would like to read the following quote:

The Grain Growers are also pleased with the announcement of a \$50 million fund for research and innovation.... Farmers from across Canada have lobbied aggressively for the Government to invest in this area, and they have heard us.

We have also heard them.



In addition to that, through our knowledge infrastructure program, millions and millions of dollars have been invested in universities and colleges right across Canada, including the Medicine Hat College in my own riding.

• (1130)

**Mr. Marc Garneau (Westmount—Ville-Marie, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, it may surprise the government but I agree with some of the tax credits that have been put into this budget implementation plan. In fact, the ones dealing with home caregivers and volunteer firemen were in our own platform as well. The reason we put them in and made them refundable was because we wanted to ensure that everybody had a chance to benefit from them, including low income Canadians.

Does the member believe that the government should consider making these tax credits refundable? Otherwise, low income Canadians will not be able to take advantage of them. I am sure that his government wants all Canadians to benefit from these tax credits, which are good.

**Mr. LaVar Payne:** Mr. Speaker, I was in Tilley, Alberta, which is a very small community in my riding. It opened a brand new fire department and has a new fire engine. The fire chief and the volunteer firefighters were absolutely delighted with the funding that we are providing through this tax credit. They told me that without that tax credit, a lot of them would have considered not volunteering again. That tax credit spurred them on and they will continue to volunteer their services to their communities.

**Mrs. Stella Ambler (Mississauga South, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, my question for the member for Medicine Hat is with regard to innovation.

The member talked about education, innovation and training. I want to let the House know that last week I visited a company in my riding of Mississauga South called ElectroVaya. It manufactures lithium ion batteries for plug-in electric vehicles. In the last year alone, it doubled its staff to over 100 and part of that had to do with the fact that it received funding, through the Department of Industry, Science and Technology's clean energy fund, for this project.

I wonder if the member for Medicine Hat has a similar story to tell about his riding or from his travels where innovation and our policies in that area have helped out a business.

**Mr. LaVar Payne:** Mr. Speaker, I am really pleased to hear that the innovation moneys we are providing to companies across Canada is working, in particular in the riding of Mississauga South. That just shows that our government is listening. We are putting our budget dollars in the right place to ensure we can grow the economy and create jobs.

**Mr. Jasbir Sandhu (Surrey North, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I am glad to have an opportunity to speak to Bill C-14, especially after having had a chance to talk to a number of constituents in my riding last week to see the real picture of what is happening at the ground level.

The week before the break I heard my Conservative colleagues talk about how we are ranked number one by the IMF, *Forbes* magazine and a number of different organizations internationally and how we are doing so well compared to the G7.

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I also heard my colleagues talk about spending \$50 million here, \$50 million there, \$200 million here. Those are hollow words. If we look at what is happening in our communities, that is not translating into jobs. The Conservatives do not believe in statistics and real facts. They are cherry-picking some of the numbers to highlight that they are working toward a great plan. The problem is they do not have a plan. The Conservatives do not have an economic action plan that will help our communities and create jobs locally. Basically, they pretend to have a plan through a piecemeal process.

After having had a chance to visit in my community, I would suggest that the Conservatives get out of this Ottawa bubble and visit real communities and people to see what is happening. There are two million Canadians who are unemployed or underemployed.

I had a chance to visit the South Fraser Community Services Society last week. I commend the members of its staff for the wonderful job they do under very difficult circumstances with the resources and tools they have available. The South Fraser Community Services Society provides valuable services to the community. It provides shelters for homeless people. It helps them with their medical needs. It provides counselling and helps people find permanent housing. The staff is wonderful. I was pleased to see what they are doing for the community.

The Conservatives talk about the prosperity of this country. What is troubling is that 20% of the people using shelters are employed but are not making enough money to pay for housing. Not only are there those who are unemployed in this country, but there are also the working poor who are not making ends meet. In the bubble within which the Conservatives live, they do not see what is happening in the communities. In my community I did not see the prosperity the Conservatives speak about.

The Conservatives talk about a great trickle-down economics plan, but it is not trickling down to average families in my community. The Conservatives talk about a different Canada which I did not see in my community.

• (1135)

The Conservatives talk about cutting corporate taxes and giving billions of dollars to their friends yet they are raising taxes on working families. For example, over the last year gas prices have been rising almost daily. The oil companies are making big money. There is tax on gas. More money is being siphoned from average families who are having difficulty making ends meet.

If we look at the price of food, what I am hearing from my constituents is that the bag of groceries they are buying with today's dollars is not enough to carry them through the week because taxes are being raised on a number of items. If the price of food goes up, the tax also goes up. The government is giving away billions of taxpayers' dollars to corporations yet it is taxing the working families who are having a tough time making ends meet.

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We need real action to create jobs. The Conservatives simply do not have a plan. We need to provide relief for families who are paying higher taxes, higher gas prices and higher grocery bills. We need to provide relief for students. The Conservatives say they are investing in universities but it is piecemeal investment. It does not make sense because they do not have a plan. Basically, their plan is to give away billions of dollars to corporations. They have done that consistently over the last seven or eight years.

I hear my friends across the aisle talk about the economic engine that drives our country. On this side of the House we know that economic engine is small business, the mom and pop operations that drive our economy. I do not know why the Conservatives are against small businesses. If they believe in an economic strategy and that small businesses create jobs, then we need to provide relief for small businesses.

There is \$500 billion sitting with corporations but they are not investing. When small businesses make money and prosper they spend their money locally. They do not send it to another country. Yet we do not have a plan from my friends across the aisle.

The tax rate for large corporations has been cut enough over the past years. We need a real economic action plan that would provide relief to families, that would invest in our communities, and that would create local jobs to help this country move forward. Clearly, the Conservatives' plan, which is not a plan, is not moving our country forward.

Further reducing taxes for large corporations basically gives away billions of dollars, money which comes from families, working class people and small businesses. That is not fair. We need a real economic action plan. I suggest that my colleagues across the aisle get on with it and invest in local jobs. They should get out of this Ottawa bubble and visit their communities to see what is happening.

• (1140)

**Mr. Harold Albrecht (Kitchener—Conestoga, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I am surprised by my colleague's attitude this morning. He is generally a positive guy but he is grumpy today. Maybe he had a bad constituency week.

My colleague is implying that there is no plan. If he would take the time to look, there have been 650,000 new jobs created. There is no better plan for a person who is trying to make ends meet than a good job.

The member also complains that there are no targeted investments. Bill C-13 includes green energy investments. As well, there are targeted investments in communities. The permanent gas tax funding will help municipalities with long-term planning and initiatives.

What the member is really missing are the amazing investments that the bill makes in education and training, forgiving loans for new doctors, helping apprentices in skilled trades and improving federal assistance for students. These are all fantastic initiatives.

Why would the NDP be against helping students and our next generation get the kind of good jobs that they need to support their families?

**Mr. Jasbir Sandhu:** Mr. Speaker, my colleague across the aisle has correctly stated that I am grumpy. I am grumpy because I have spoken with my constituents and the Conservatives' economic policy is not trickling down to my constituents. They have elected me to be their voice. I am grumpy because my constituents have told me what matters to them. Clearly, the Conservatives' action plan is not helping.

With regard to the employment numbers, the government now claims to have created 660,000 new jobs. That is also a distortion. We know the Conservatives do not believe in facts and stats. We have barely seen 200,000 new jobs since the pre-recessionary employment high point in 2008, yet the labour force has grown by 450,000.

Basically, the Conservatives fudge the numbers or cherry-pick them. That is not—

• (1145)

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bruce Stanton):** Order. The hon. member will know there may be other members who wish to ask a question.

The hon. member for Vancouver Quadra.

**Ms. Joyce Murray (Vancouver Quadra, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for Surrey North for his capable exposition of his party's position and his support for small business. This being small business week, I do want to add my concern about the Conservative budget picking large business over small business.

The billions of dollars that would come out of the treasury and into the coffers of larger more profitable businesses is a choice the Conservatives are making. It is their choice to spend that money on large businesses rather than make those funds available for small businesses. What small businesses would receive is a tax hike.

I ask my colleague from Surrey North how would businesses in his riding deal with the 5.6% increase in EI premiums next year that would be taking a further \$1.2 billion out of businesses? How would those small businesses feel about having their payroll taxes go up?

**Mr. Jasbir Sandhu:** Mr. Speaker, we have seen over the years the large giveaways to large corporations and money being taken from the small businesses which will be facing a payroll tax in the new year. I am glad the member brought that up because that is what the Conservatives believe in. They believe in taking money away from small businesses and families, taxing them, and giving it to their friends. Frankly, that is not fair.

I have talked with a number of small businesses in my constituency. They are already hurting. They were hurt by the government when it introduced the HST. That hurt our construction industry quite a bit. We are barely recovering from that. That is where small business is hurting. Clearly, the Conservatives are bent on giving away billions more dollars to large corporations.



*Government Orders*

We have a corporate tax rate that is one of the lowest in the G7 and G20. We are competitive. We do not need to give more money away to large corporations.

**Mr. Wladyslaw Lizon (Mississauga East—Cooksville, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, Canada's economic action plan has assisted Canada to have the strongest job growth record in the G7 with nearly 600,000 net new jobs having been created since July 2009. The IMF projects that Canada will continue to have the strongest economic growth among the G7 over the next two years. We are not immune from the global economic turbulence and that is why we have to stay the course and implement the next phase of Canada's economic action plan.

In the keeping Canada's economy and jobs growing bill, our government is focused on what matters to Canadians: creating jobs and promoting economic growth. The incredible investments our government has made in my community of Mississauga East—Cooksville have enabled us to weather the economic turbulence with major investments that have enhanced the lives of those living in our community.

Mississauga, Ontario is one of Canada's most diverse and quickly growing cities. Canada's economic action plan invested in the city specifically in Celebration Square. This square will do what Mississauga has struggled to do for years: develop a city-wide spirit. The public square of the 1950s where people could go to meet and enjoy their community is back and thriving in Mississauga. Thanks to Canada's economic action plan, this dream was realized and the square is now fully functional and is being used by tens of thousands of people, bringing the population of one of Canada's largest cities together.

Canada's economic action plan investments have redeveloped the Lorne Park, Lakeview and Burnhamthorpe libraries. We have rehabilitated more than 20 roads and invested in transit priorities and garage repairs. We have added additional lighting in 73 parks and neighbourhoods, resulting in safer play spaces and communities for all our citizens.

Mississauga has had its old water mains replaced, reservoirs rehabilitated and its Meadowvale north pumping station expanded. Community centres have been resurrected. Entire communities have been raised from the ground up because our government's economic action plan was in place to help those who needed it the most.

There were 60,000 net new jobs created in September. Over 90% of those are full time and over 80% are in the private sector. Many people who were struggling before the economic action plan are now enjoying a better life because they are working at jobs they love and participating in Canadian life.

Canada's economic action plan has produced the results that Canadians needed, but the global economic turbulence means we must stay the course. We must continue on the road we are currently travelling in order to maintain the strength and stability that we are building. The second phase of Canada's economic action plan is a much needed continuation.

We will invest in job creation and economic growth by providing a temporary hiring credit for small businesses. We will expand tax support for clean energy generation to encourage green investments.

We will extend the mineral exploration tax credit for flow-through share investors by one year to support Canada's mining sector. We will simplify customs tariffs in order to facilitate trade and lower the administrative burden for businesses. We will eliminate the accelerated capital cost allowance treatment for investments in manufacturing and processing machinery to support the manufacturing and processing sector. We will eliminate the mandatory retirement age for federally regulated employees in order to give older workers who wish to remain in the workplace the opportunity to choose the option that works best for them.

• (1150)

The second phase of Canada's economic action plan will help families by introducing a new family caregiver tax credit to assist caregivers of all types to participate and make memories with their loved ones who fall terminally ill. We will also remove the limit on the amount of eligible expenses caregivers can claim under the medical expense tax credit in respect of financially dependent relatives. We will continue to help families by introducing a new children's arts tax credit for programs associated with children's cultural, recreational and developmental activities.

We will invest in education and training by forgiving loans for new doctors and nurses in underserved rural and remote areas. We all want Canada's students to succeed in the global economy with the help of the best education possible. We will invest in our students by improving federal financial assistance for students so they can continue to gain the education they need to continue toward their dreams. We will make it easier to allocate registered education savings plan assets among siblings without incurring tax penalties or forfeiting Canada's education savings grants. We are doubling the in-study income exemption from \$50 per week to \$100 per week, benefiting over 100,000 students by allowing them to work more without negatively affecting their loans.

We are going to support communities by legislating a permanent annual investment of \$2 billion in the gas tax fund to provide predictable long-term infrastructure funding for municipalities. We are going to enhance the wage earner protection program to cover more workers affected by employer bankruptcy or receivership. This government will support the tireless hard work of volunteer firefighters by introducing a volunteer firefighters tax credit.

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This government will respect the taxpayers by phasing out the direct subsidies of political parties and closing numerous tax loopholes that allow a few businesses and individuals to avoid paying their fair share of taxes.

The government will support seniors by enhancing the GIS, enhancing the new horizons program, and extending the eco-energy retrofit program.

We recognize the vital role that small businesses play in the economy and job creation. That is why we declared 2011 the year of the entrepreneur. We are committed to helping entrepreneurs grow their business and succeed.

The next phase of Canada's economic action plan includes a number of measures to further enable small businesses and entrepreneurs to grow and create jobs. This includes a new hiring credit for small businesses. This is a temporary one-time credit. This credit will help up to 520,000 employers defray the costs of additional hiring. We will reduce the red tape and support youth entrepreneurs by investing \$20 million in them. This builds on the government's significant action to reduce taxation for small businesses. We will reduce the small business tax rate from 12% to 11%. These reductions will help create jobs and economic growth for Canadian families and communities by making Canada the greatest country in which to develop a business.

Canada has seven straight quarters of economic growth. We will remain on track to balance the budget by 2015. This builds on top of the action the government has taken since 2006 to support Canadians. We have cut taxes over 120 times since forming government. We have cut the lowest personal income tax rate to 15%. We have removed over one million Canadians from the tax rolls. We have increased the amount Canadians can earn tax free. We have reduced the GST from 7% to 5%.

We have also introduced enhancements to the universal child care benefit, the child tax credit. We have introduced a fitness tax credit. We have brought in the landmark tax-free savings account, the most important personal savings vehicle since RRSPs.

• (1155)

We introduced the registered disability savings plan to help families who have children with disabilities. Families are benefiting from other new targeted measures, like the first-time home buyers' tax credit and the public transit tax credit.

This government's strong record—

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bruce Stanton):** Order. I regret to tell the member that the time allocated for his remarks has expired. We will now move on to questions and comments.

The hon. member for Kings—Hants.

**Hon. Scott Brison (Kings—Hants, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the hon. member has cited the small business hiring tax credit. Given that that tax credit is only worth about \$165 million, and given that the Conservatives raised payroll taxes on small businesses by \$600 million last January and plan to raise the payroll taxes for businesses by \$1.2 billion this coming January, and given that the Canadian Federation of Independent Business is saying that these increases will cost jobs, will the member admit that these payroll tax hikes of

almost \$2 billion in fact will cost more jobs than the \$165 million pittance of tax relief the Conservatives purport to offer small businesses?

**Mr. Wladyslaw Lizon:** Mr. Speaker, the Toronto Board of Trade said:

—[it] welcomed new initiatives to spur small-business productivity and hiring, such as the Hiring Credit for Small Business. "SMEs are the engines of job growth"... "Spurring productivity and employment growth among SMEs, as this Budget does, should help Canada's economic recovery".

We presented this plan to Canadians during the last campaign and Canadians spoke very clearly on our plan.

• (1200)

[Translation]

**Mr. Hoang Mai (Brossard—La Prairie, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I thank the member from the other side for his speech. The government is saying that everything is good and that its economic action plan is working. But we still have 1.4 million people unemployed. If we include those who are underemployed or who have given up, we are talking about 2 million people. What is worse is that the youth unemployment rate has nearly doubled. Last summer, it reached 17.4%.

Could my colleague tell us why the government is saying that everything is good and that it will continue in the same direction?

[English]

**Mr. Wladyslaw Lizon:** Mr. Speaker, our government has a strong record of responsibility to Canadians. It is evident that we must focus on the economy because still there are many Canadians out of work. That is why we need to implement the next phase of Canada's economic action plan to secure our economic recovery for all Canadians today and in the years ahead. That includes looking after those who are currently unemployed, giving tax credits to small businesses, giving them incentives that would increase employment and productivity, and to create the right environment for businesses to stay in Canada.

**Mrs. Cathy McLeod (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of National Revenue, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague for his very articulate words in support of moving this important bill forward. He talked about seven quarters of growth. The unemployment rate in 2008 was high, but it is much lower now, although it is still higher than we want it to be.

The opposition has said there is no plan, but we have a plan. Could the member talk about our plan in terms of moving the economy forward?

**Mr. Wladyslaw Lizon:** Mr. Speaker, as I mentioned in my remarks, Bill C-13 is the plan that was presented to Canadians. Canadians spoke very clearly on May 2 and we know the results. We have the full support of Canadians on our plan. We have to make sure that we deliver what we promised to deliver. This government has a record of actually delivering on its promises.



**Hon. Scott Brison (Kings—Hants, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I rise today to speak to Bill C-13, the government's second implementation bill for the 2011 budget.

My comments will generally focus on two themes: first, there has been a growth in unemployment under the Conservative government; and second, there has been a deliberate decision by the Conservatives to exclude low income Canadians from many of the measures of budget 2011.

The first point is the growth in the number of Canadians looking for work. The Conservatives have been patting themselves on the back about the job situation in Canada. However, the fact is that today the job situation is worse than it was when the Conservatives took office and it is worse than it was before the fall of 2008.

Today, Canada has over 525,000 fewer net full-time jobs than in August 2008. In August 2008, there were 14,631,300 Canadians who had full-time jobs. Today, that number is down to 14,106,100 Canadians who have full-time jobs. There are more than half a million fewer Canadians with good, full-time jobs today than in August 2008.

The Conservatives like to claim credit for creating jobs, but the fact is that all of the net new jobs created since the recession have been in part-time work. Today, there are more than 1.3 million Canadians who are unemployed and looking for work, and the number of jobless Canadians has been growing. Even when we factor in part-time work, there are over 310,000 more jobless Canadians today than before the downturn in October 2008.

Job growth in Canada has simply failed to keep up with population growth, so it is harder for people who are out of work to actually find a job today. This is the reality that is faced by Canadians across the country, including in my riding of Kings—Hants and the Annapolis Valley of Nova Scotia.

There is also a very uneven recovery, if any recovery, in Canada. If we look at provinces like Alberta and Saskatchewan, provinces that have the wealth of natural resources of oil, gas, potash and minerals, there is a very different economic story from that which exists in provinces like Ontario, Quebec and the maritime provinces.

The reality is that if there has been any recovery, it has been a very uneven recovery, and the macro numbers in terms of employment figures in Canada simply do not reflect the disparity within Canada, and the growing gap between haves and have nots, including have provinces and have not provinces.

The economic region of the Annapolis Valley in Nova Scotia is made up of Annapolis county, Kings county and Hants county. In this House of Commons it is represented by two members of Parliament, the member for West Nova, a Conservative MP, and myself.

This region is one of many across Canada that has not recovered from the last recession. We have seen massive layoffs at Fundy Gypsum, Eastern Protein, Maple Leaf Foods in Canard, and the Larsen's Plant. We have seen people who have worked at these companies, in some cases for 20 or 30 years or longer, who have watched their good full-time jobs disappear. Now they are struggling

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to make ends meet and put food on the table with part-time work, if they are actually able to find it.

In an area with a population of just under 100,000, the Annapolis Valley now has 5,800 fewer net jobs today than in August 2008. The unemployment rate in the Annapolis Valley of Nova Scotia has grown from 5% to 8% since the fall of 2008.

The number of people without jobs who are looking for work has grown by 1,700, and more than twice as many as that have simply stopped looking for work and have left the labour force completely.

The local population has declined by 600 people, as people give up and, in many cases, move away. The region is struggling to pay for local services with an aging population and a shrinking tax base.

This is not an isolated example. We can see this happening across large parts of Ontario and Quebec, across the Maritimes. The population we see in a lot of rural Canada is aging disproportionately. The proportion of people paying taxes is shrinking, while demand for government programs, health care, education and social assistance continues to grow.

● (1205)

There is a growing number of unemployed Canadians who are looking for work but have become discouraged under the Conservative government. They want their government to develop a real plan to create real jobs, but we see nothing, no imagination, no long-term thinking from the Conservatives.

In fact, the Conservatives are moving in the opposite direction. They are endangering Canadian jobs with their reckless increase in EI premiums.

In January, the Conservatives will hike EI premiums by 5.6% even though they know that payroll taxes like EI premiums are known job killers. This increase in January follows last January's increase by the Conservatives. The Canadian Federation of Independent Business estimates that the 2011 EI payroll tax increase will cost small businesses about \$600 million and the 2012 increase will cost \$1.2 billion. Are jobs created by increasing job killing payroll taxes? I do not think so.

The Conservatives claim that their small business hiring tax credit will create jobs. This is only a tax credit of \$165 million when the Conservatives are actually increasing premiums by almost \$2 billion. Most small businesses in Canada will not even qualify for the hiring credit for small businesses because they already pay too much in EI premiums. For the small businesses that do qualify, the Conservatives are giving with one hand and taking away with the other. They are treating the credit as business income and then they are taxing it.

The Conservatives hiring credit for small business is too small to make a significant impact on the economy. It will not even come close to matching the negative impact of the massive increase in EI premiums that they are imposing on Canadian employers. Only the Conservatives could claim that a tax credit that only increases EI premiums by over \$1.6 billion instead of \$1.8 billion is actually a measure to increase Canadian jobs.

### *Government Orders*

The truth is that these EI premium increases will cost Canadian jobs at a time when unemployment numbers are up and our economy is teetering on the edge of recession. By refusing to act and present a real plan to create jobs, the Conservatives are failing the more than 1.3 million Canadians who are unemployed and looking for work.

The second issue that I want to comment on is the decision by the Conservatives to exclude low income Canadians from many of the benefits in budget 2011.

The Conservatives are deliberately excluding many low income Canadian families from programs such as the family caregiver tax credit, the volunteer firefighters tax credit, and the children's art tax credit. The fact is if someone quits a job to take care of a sick family member at home, in a lot of cases that individual will not qualify for a dime under the family caregiver tax credit.

By making these benefits non-refundable, the Conservatives are excluding a lot of low income families from receiving these benefits. So perversely, the families that need the help the most will not qualify for these boutique tax benefits because they do not have a high enough minimum income level to actually qualify. So, the person who quits a job to take care of a loved one at home, who is not making enough money, will not benefit from the Conservative family caregiver tax credit.

My riding has an aging population. Family members are taking a lot of their time away from work to help loved ones. In my own family, my sister, as an example, by day is a VON. She is taking a lot of time to help take care of my parents who are in their eighties and at home. A lot of these families do not make enough to qualify to benefit from the family caregiver tax credit. It is the same thing with the volunteer firefighters tax credit. In many cases rural Canadian volunteer firefighters in low income families need the help to serve their communities.

It is fundamentally unfair for the Conservatives to not make these tax credits fully refundable in order to benefit all Canadian families, but particularly unfair to deny benefits to those low income Canadian families who need the help the most.

• (1210)

**Mr. Brian Storseth (Westlock—St. Paul, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, as I listened to my colleague give his speech, I noted that he made a couple of comments that I found to be somewhat inaccurate. He said that of the 650,000 total employment positions that have been created under this government since July 2009 none were full-time positions when in fact over 90% of them were full-time positions. He talked about job increases. In September alone there were over 60,000 new job increases where the unemployment rate declined.

One thing I have learned in this place is that when we want to have a fulsome debate, it helps if both sides use the real numbers. I just wonder where this member is getting his numbers from. Perhaps he could cite his sources for us.

**Hon. Scott Brison:** Mr. Speaker, I would ask the hon. member to look at the data collected by Statistics Canada, that organization that the Conservatives regularly try to attack, try to de-fund, and hope to de-legitimize at the same time. Statistics Canada figures are very clear that today Canada has over 525,000 fewer net full-time jobs than in August 2008. The math is pretty simple. In August 2008

there were 14,631,300 Canadians who had a full-time job. Today that number is down to 14,106,100 full-time jobs and unemployment rates are higher today than they were in the fall of 2008, so it is pretty clear.

The Statistics Canada figures are there. The Conservatives do not like to listen to data and evidence. They prefer to govern by ideology than by evidence, but the figures are there.

• (1215)

**Mr. Wayne Marston (Hamilton East—Stoney Creek, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I wanted to say in response to the member who has just spoken, when identifying the number of people who are on unemployment, that one of the things that is often missing is those people who have given up on looking for a job. We talk about an unemployment rate of about 7.3% but the real number is closer to 11% when we take into account the people who are not counted. I think the member, being from the east coast of Canada, is very aware of that hidden number of people because in places like the Maritimes, where there is part-time or seasonal work, there is a huge number of them.

**Hon. Scott Brison:** Mr. Speaker, I know the hon. member has spent some time in the Maritimes and Moncton, and represents a riding in Hamilton. If we really look at the macro numbers for Canada, they do not reflect the disparity between regions in the country and this is a very strange kind of recovery. In fact, it is part of a global economic restructuring and there is a gap between rich and poor and have and have not, and those with opportunities and those without. That is felt in Canada.

If we look at what is happening in resource and commodity rich provinces and compare the unemployment figures to those that do not have the same commodity wealth in Canada, it is really troubling. As a recovery is driven by commodities, it drives up the Canadian dollar because we have a commodity dollar and it crowds out a lot of jobs in manufacturing and good high paying jobs in the traditional economic heartland of Ontario, as an example.

This is a really challenging time for many Canadian families, so I think all members of the House and all parties must realize that many Canadians are having trouble just getting by right now.

**Ms. Joyce Murray (Vancouver Quadra, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, to my colleague from Kings—Hants, I recently completed a rural economy tour in southeastern British Columbia and I heard from small business and tourism owners some of the challenges they face and the fact that the federal government is missing in action in the partnership the business owners need with local, provincial and the federal government. They talk about the reduction in tourism marketing, and the absence of skills and apprenticeship programs that help them access the people they need.



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I wanted to hear from the member whether anything at all in the large corporate tax breaks or in the EI tax premiums and so on helps to address those issues that the owners of small businesses and tourism businesses face.

**Hon. Scott Brison:** Mr. Speaker, what I hear from small businesses in my riding is that they are struggling. I had the owner of a restaurant in Windsor, Nova Scotia say to me recently that this person is having the worst year in 20-some years of operation because when the local gypsum company closed down its operations and people were laid off, they did not have the money to go out and buy lunch or dinner with their families.

There is a lot more the government could be doing to create opportunities within the small business community and that hon. member has been a leader in small business as an entrepreneur herself and has brought to this House that experience, and has some great ideas on how to create growth. What we need is a government that listens to members of Parliament, regardless of their party, who have legitimate ideas on how to create growth and opportunity for Canadian individuals and small businesses.

**Mrs. Kelly Block (Saskatoon—Rosetown—Biggar, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, on May 2 Canadians made a clear choice. They voted to keep the economy on track to recovery, and they voted to create jobs for both themselves and their children.

It has been the priority of our Conservative government to secure Canada's economic recovery, encourage growth, and create jobs through Canada's economic action plan. We are into its next phase, and it is clear that this is a plan that is working, a plan that is responding powerfully to an extraordinary challenge. Since its inception, we have cut taxes, opened new markets for businesses, and created approximately 650,000 net new jobs. For the fourth year in a row, Canada's financial system has been ranked the soundest system in the world by the World Economic Forum.

However, we cannot ignore the reality that yet we find many Canadians are still looking for work and the global recovery remains fragile.

The introduction of keeping Canada's economy and jobs growing act is paramount and includes key elements of the next phase of Canada's economic action plan. We know, as I said, this is a plan that is working, so we must move this legislation forward with perseverance and intention.

I am proud and incredibly honoured to once again be representing the constituents of Saskatoon—Rosetown—Biggar. I know that this legislation, which continues to deliver on our promise of a low-tax plan for jobs and growth, will be well received by many residents in my riding.

Saskatoon—Rosetown—Biggar is a diverse riding. It is home to a broad range of demographics: farmers, tradespeople, business owners, artists, students, aboriginals, immigrants, new Canadians and people of every age. It draws on several economic bases, including agriculture, manufacturing, mining and the service industry.

Though there is diversity in the population, we can all agree that there are basic fundamentals every community requires in order to thrive: families need an adequate source of income; individuals need

access to education and training; communities need stability and support to provide long-term sustainable infrastructure.

This is what our Conservative government is delivering on. By introducing measures such as the small business hiring tax credit in the keeping Canada's economy and jobs growing act, we are helping the private sector take back their rightful place as the primary source of new jobs.

This week is Small Business Week. It is important that we acknowledge the hard work and dedication of our small business owners. Small businesses employ millions of Canadians and are significant drivers of our economy. Given the fragile state of the global economy, the contributions of small businesses are more important than ever.

That is why we are committed to assisting small business expansion by lessening the costs of hiring. Consequently, we are helping unemployed workers and people new to the job market get the jobs they need and empower them to realize their dreams.

As I mentioned, we are also doing our part to strengthen families and ease the family budget. By introducing initiatives such as the family caregiver tax credit and the children's arts tax credit, we are helping to alleviate the cost of caring for loved ones and ensuring that kids are given the opportunity to thrive creatively in art, music or drama.

We are interested in creating a legacy for our children and ensuring a sustainable future for Canada. By improving financial assistance for students and making it easier to allocate registered education savings plan assets among siblings, we are enabling greater access to higher education.

I would also like to remind my colleagues that we have kept our commitment to ensure that Canada's seniors, who have worked hard to build our country, have a secure retirement and a good quality of life. That is why we introduced, earlier this year, the measure to enhance the guaranteed income supplement for those seniors who rely almost exclusively on their old age security and GIS. This is yet another example of our government keeping its promises.

In Saskatchewan we are blessed to have one of the lowest unemployment rates and highest growth rates in Canada. All of these measures that I have mentioned will help ensure that our economy continues to thrive and that the most vulnerable are not left behind.

● (1220)

As I have already mentioned, I represent a diverse riding that is both rural and urban. Access to doctors is an issue in rural and remote areas across the country; that is why we are delivering for Canadians by offering an incentive for new doctors and nurses to practise in those rural and remote areas. By offering student loan forgiveness to doctors and nurses who practise in rural and remote areas, we will ensure that families living in those communities receive the same high level of acceptable quality health care, no matter where they choose to live.

*Government Orders*

Similarly, many small urban and rural communities rely on volunteer firefighters to protect their lives and property. To encourage these volunteers and recognize the important service they provide to our communities, we will be providing a volunteer firefighters tax credit to those who perform at least 200 hours of service in their communities. This is something that has been asked for. It is a promise we have made, and now it will be a promise kept.

Canadians are a responsible, practical people, and they expect the same from their government. That is why we cannot continue with deficits indefinitely, as the opposition is calling for through a new round of stimulus spending.

This Conservative government made a promise to Canadians that we would eliminate the deficit. We will cut the deficit through restrained spending and through a targeted review of our programs. Through a combination of attrition in our public service and by targeting programs that were created to solve the problems of decades past and have long since outlived their usefulness, we will ensure value for tax dollars and continue towards our goal of returning Canada to balanced budgets in the 2014-15 fiscal year.

We also promised Canadians that we would eliminate the per-vote subsidy that forces taxpayers to give money to political parties. Regardless of what opposition parties might think, most Canadians believe that political parties are not entitled to tax dollars via a direct per-vote subsidy. Eliminating the subsidy will save Canadians millions upon millions of tax dollars every year.

In summary, we have been listening to Canadians. We promised to deliver on the priorities of Canadian families and to support communities. We promised to deliver jobs and economic growth. We promised to invest in education and respect the taxpayer.

Canadians have spoken, and we have listened. Now it is time to do our part. I hope that all parties will work collaboratively to respond to Canadians and the expectations and needs that they have expressed. I encourage all members in the House to support the keeping Canada's economy and jobs growing act. A vote to pass the bill is a vote in support of all Canadians.

• (1225)

[Translation]

**Mr. Hoang Mai (Brossard—La Prairie, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for her speech.

She spoke about the importance of small businesses, as it is Small Business Week, and she said that there were measures for small businesses in this budget. If we really analyze these measures, we can see that they are not enough, in my opinion. There are tax credits that are available only to some businesses. Instead, we propose lowering the tax rate for small businesses.

Could my colleague confirm that the best way to help all businesses is to lower the tax rate?

[English]

**Mrs. Kelly Block:** Mr. Speaker, by introducing the keeping Canada's economy and jobs growing act, we are responding to all Canadians. This legislation will continue to deliver on our promise of a low-tax plan for jobs and growth across the country, continue to keep the economy on track to recovery, ensure value for tax dollars

and, as I mentioned, continue towards our goal of returning Canada to balanced budgets.

This has been the priority of our Conservative government, and indeed it should be the priority of members in the House. I would encourage the member to support the passing of the bill.

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the member said that "Canadians have spoken, and we will listen". In the Prairies there was a plebiscite through which wheat farmers sent a very strong message. They were hoping that the government was going to listen to what a vast majority of wheat farmers were saying, which is that they want to retain the Canadian Wheat Board. Based on the member saying that Conservatives are listening to what Canadians are saying, can she assure the House that her government will listen to what the Canadian wheat farmer is saying in the Prairies?

• (1230)

**Mrs. Kelly Block:** Mr. Speaker, on March 22 the government tabled budget 2011. As we all know, the budget was not adopted prior to the dissolution of Parliament, but on May 2 Canadians expressed their support for our government's low-tax plan to protect and create jobs, to secure Canada's economic recovery and to improve the well-being of Canadians in future years. As a result, the update tabled on June 6 included all of the measures that were previously announced on March 22.

As I mentioned earlier, the keeping Canada's economy and jobs growing act includes the key elements of the next phase of Canada's economic action plan. We campaigned on that plan, and Canadians spoke on May 2. I would encourage the member to support the passing of the bill.

**Mr. LaVar Payne (Medicine Hat, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise to ask my colleague a question in terms of the next phase of our economic action plan. Could my colleague from Saskatoon—Rosetown—Biggar tell us how this new budget would help people in her riding?

**Mrs. Kelly Block:** Mr. Speaker, I had the opportunity this summer to spend a lot of time in my riding and to speak with constituents about the next phase of Canada's economic action plan. They told us before the election that this plan was working and that this was an opportunistic, unnecessary election. They are telling us now to get it done and to keep our promises, because there are measures in Canada's economic action plan that would make a difference in the lives of my constituents.

As I mentioned, we would have the small business hiring tax credit, the family caregiver tax credit, the children's arts tax credit, the volunteer firefighters tax credit. All of these tax credits would benefit the constituents in my riding.



We are delivering on our commitments and ensuring that our economy continues to thrive and that the most vulnerable are not left behind.

[Translation]

**Mr. Hoang Mai (Brossard—La Prairie, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I am speaking out today against Bill C-13, which supposedly supports economic and job growth in Canada. I do not feel that it does enough.

I will be focusing on two issues: first, the fact that this bill demonstrates that the government is out of touch with what families and individuals in Canada are facing. Second, I will talk about the lack of vision in this bill.

When we look at the current situation, it is obvious that the government is out of touch. Families are having more and more trouble making ends meet. Families are in debt and household debt sits at more than 150%. Just look at what is happening with the Occupy Canada, Occupy Montreal and Occupy Toronto movements. People are unhappy and the government is not listening. People are unhappy because the gap between rich and poor is growing. Yet the government continues to contribute to that gap. Just like the IMF, the Conference Board is saying that the gap between rich and poor in Canada is growing, and at an alarming rate.

What is the government's response? To reduce the taxes of large corporations. We know that, in reality, reducing the taxes of large corporations does not help the population. In the Standing Committee on Finance, we have heard it said that this will benefit everyone. That is not true because not everyone owns shares in large businesses and corporations. We also know that the large businesses that benefit from these tax reductions are currently keeping \$500 million in their own coffers rather than reinvesting it. So the entire population is not benefiting.

From a job creation perspective, we need look no further than the case of Electrolux, which benefited from tax reductions and then transferred jobs to the United States. Is this how the government should move forward? We do not think so, and many economists agree with us.

This government remains out of touch because it is still not taking action. The economic situation is a growing concern. People need reassurance. The New Democratic Party proposed a motion, which was unanimously adopted by the House, indicating that action must be taken; however, there is nothing in the bill to deal with this issue. We asked what Canadians want, and they said that they want more jobs and more security and that they want the government to take action.

The hon. member spoke about the election promises that the Conservatives made. However, the Conservatives are not really looking at what is happening right now, for example, the bank debt crisis in Europe or the uncertainty in the United States, which were not issues at that time. Nevertheless, the government is still not taking action. The government is therefore extremely out of touch with what is currently happening.

I spoke of this government's lack of vision. In this budget, the government could really move forward and think about a green economy. With regard to the economy, job creation and industries,

the government could think about developing and investing so that employment is created not just now, but also for a long time to come.

### *Government Orders*

The hon. member spoke about Germany. Germany was one of the first countries to invest in research and development in the public sector, and the country is currently reaping the benefits. Our government, on the other hand, is giving some tax credits, but they do not benefit everyone. We are not saying that tax credits are a bad thing. On the contrary, they are important, but they are not enough. The government needs a more comprehensive, more long-term vision. The government needs a strategy. That is what this government is lacking.

We asked for investments in infrastructure. As many members know, the Champlain Bridge is in my riding. We thank the government for finally listening to the NDP and giving in to our requests. However, this still does not appear in the budget. Why are there no infrastructure investments? We are not even the ones saying this; it is the Minister of Finance. In 2009, he said himself that infrastructure investment has five times the economic impact of corporate income tax cuts.

● (1235)

This is purely economics. The government, which claims to care about the economy and job creation, should listen to what its own finance minister said. It is important to invest in infrastructure; however, we are not necessarily talking about just stimulus, but rather about a structural deficit of \$130 billion for Canadian municipalities. This government is doing nothing about that, and instead prefers giving gifts left and right, like the \$50 million given to the riding of the President of the Treasury Board. It hands out gifts instead of making infrastructure investments that would benefit Canadians now. And, in the long term, this would also mean savings in terms of productivity.

My riding has suffered a loss of \$1.3 billion in terms of productivity and, for over five years, we pressured this government to act. Once again, we still have not seen any schedule or plan for moving ahead with the Champlain Bridge project. We asked to work with this government, not only on the Standing Committee on Finance but also on the Standing Committee on Transport, Infrastructure and Communities, but this government refuses to act or to work with the other parties. Quite the reverse, it stubbornly clings to its ideology and its election promises, which do not take into account the current reality. It has no vision whatsoever.

During the last campaign, I met people affected by the pension issue. A woman who had worked for Nortel told me she was devastated because she had worked for years and contributed to her pension fund only to lose everything. We know what happened with Nortel. This government did nothing to protect the pensions of those people. It is doing nothing to help seniors living below the poverty line. Do you realize that seniors are now being asked to go back to work and pay? Nothing is being done to help them, which we believe demonstrates a lack of vision and compassion.

### *Government Orders*

As for nurses and doctors, the proposed measures are already in place, but they are not enough. It is important to create positions for doctors and nurses. In Canada, there is a problem in that regard. Just ask those around you if they have a family doctor. It is difficult to find one, especially in rural areas. This government has not yet taken action on that issue.

We are not asking for much. First, the government must listen to us and to our proposals, which are very logical. Members spoke earlier about small businesses and the fact that they create more than 50% of jobs. Why not help these small businesses not just by giving them a tax credit to hire people, but also by lowering their taxes? Instead, the government has decided to cut taxes for big business—unfortunately, the Liberals got the ball rolling on that one—which really has no impact. We can see that.

What is really shocking is that this government still continues to say that everything is fine and that it is business as usual when, in fact, 1.4 million people are unemployed. And if we add those who are discouraged or who have stopped looking, that number climbs to 2 million. That is serious.

The government lacks vision and is not in touch with reality. With regard to job cuts, this government has cut 600 or 700 positions at Environment Canada. It clearly lacks vision when it comes to the future and a green economy.

Oil and gas companies are receiving \$761 million in tax credits or reductions.

● (1240)

[English]

**Mr. LaVar Payne (Medicine Hat, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I listened quite intently to our colleague across the way. We understand that the NDP is the high tax situation. It wants to increase taxes on corporations. If the NDP were in power, it would increase taxes on corporations. What would corporations do? They would not invest money in job opportunities for Canadians. In fact, most likely there would be layoffs because of the high tax burden that would be put on these organizations.

In fact, over the last number of years, the NDP has voted against every one of our budget measures, which have created well over 600,000 jobs. I ask the member if the NDP would remove its choice for high taxes for corporations.

[Translation]

**Mr. Hoang Mai:** Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the member opposite for his questions.

If we look at what is happening at the provincial level—and my colleague knows this—the NDP believes in a balanced budget. However, this time we are talking about tax cuts that are somewhat idealistic. In 2008, the corporate tax rate was very competitive with the one in the United States and it is still lower than theirs. Do corporate tax cuts help the economy perform better and create jobs? Obviously not. Almost 2.5 million people are unemployed. It is a matter of choice and the current government is choosing its friends, the corporations, over the Canadian public.

**Mr. Jonathan Tremblay (Montmorency—Charlevoix—Haute-Côte-Nord, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I was particularly glad to hear my colleague talk about corporate tax cuts and how they allow

corporations to accumulate vast sums of money. Yet, the Conservatives' key argument is that these corporations will reinvest in the country. In fact, the money accumulates. I would like my colleague to elaborate on that.

● (1245)

**Mr. Hoang Mai:** Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my colleague for his question. Indeed, the problem with the government's vision is that it gives tax cuts without asking for anything in return. Some \$500 million is going into the coffers of large corporations and is not being reinvested. If tax cuts are given to the corporations and they can do what they want, then that money will go to the shareholders or in their coffers. That is only natural. Companies are worried about the economy and the government is doing nothing about it.

[English]

**Ms. Joyce Murray (Vancouver Quadra, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I heard a Conservative colleague talk about tax breaks for large corporations being a way to reinvest in the community and jobs. However, we know that the largest corporations are not net producers of jobs. It is the small and medium-sized enterprises that are the net producers of jobs. We also know there is no research to suggest that this next layer of tax breaks will actually be invested in new Canadian jobs or in upgrades.

Would the NDP member comment on what impact the increased taxes on small businesses, through the EI tax increase, is likely to have on small business job creation?

**Mr. Hoang Mai:** Mr. Speaker, it is true that the small tax credit the government is offering to small businesses does not compensate for the losses small businesses will have. It is really shocking when the government says that this is small business week and that small businesses are important. In the end, it is increasing the burden on small businesses, which we know are creating more than 50% of new jobs. Basically, the government is not heading in the right direction and that is why we are opposed to the proposals in Bill C-13.

**Mr. Brent Rathgeber (Edmonton—St. Albert, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, it is an honour for me to rise today and speak to Bill C-13, keeping Canada's economy and jobs growing act. This is important legislation, which seeks to implement the next phase of Canada's economic action plan.

The bill seeks to implement a number of important initiatives announced in June's throne speech and also in the spring election, and reiterates our government's firm and strong commitment to continued economic growth and job creation for all Canadians. Our government's record speaks for itself and speaks loudly.

Since July 2009 our government has created 600,000 net new jobs, most of which are full-time, and our economy is consistently rated as one of the strongest in the world.



*Government Orders*

This weekend we saw protests concerning the banking system. We know Canada's banking system is on solid ground because of appropriate regulations regarding lending habits. Thanks to that, we have a strong economy and it is consistent with our government's overall vision for the economy. However, we are not immune to turbulent events occurring in the world economy and that is why we must pass the legislation before us to ensure that we are capable of withstanding whatever lies before us.

Bill C-13, also known colloquially as the budget implementation act, would create five general themes in which there are many provisions to implement the next phase of Canada's economic action plan. The five general themes include: first, the promotion of job creation and economic growth; second, support of communities; third, help families; fourth, investment in education and training; and, fifth, respect for taxpayers. What I propose to do today is highlight one or two specific implementation measures contained in Bill C-13 under each of the five broad categories.

With respect to job creation and economic growth, it is important to note that this legislation would provide a temporary hiring credit for small businesses to encourage additional hiring. There is some agreement on both sides of the House that small business really is the engine of economic growth in Canada.

I talk to small businessmen and women frequently when I am back home in Edmonton—St. Albert and they have told me that the cost of hiring is an impediment to the expansion of their business. It is not just simply a matter of salary. With respect to an individual who might draw a salary of \$40,000 per annum, I understand the actual cost to that small business is probably closer to \$55,000 or \$60,000 when benefits, unemployment insurance premiums and training are calculated. The government's solution to this is the \$1,000 hiring credit for small businesses to encourage them to hire individuals and add to their payroll. I think we would all agree that is an appropriate tax credit and one that would help small businesses continue to hire and continue to build and grow our economy.

Also of significance are the provisions that would eliminate the mandatory retirement age for federally-regulated employees in order to give older workers who wish to work the option of remaining in the workforce.

I come from Alberta, and it is blessed in its ability to somewhat sustain economic downturns because of its resource-based economy. Notwithstanding current instability, some economists predict that there will be labour shortages in Alberta of up to 70,000 workers, mostly in construction but also in manufacturing and administration.

Reducing the mandatory retirement age for workers who reach the age of 65 would do two important things. First, it would give workers the option, if they so choose and their health is good, to stay in the workforce. Second, it would help employers who might otherwise be experiencing employee shortages to have some benefit in terms of maintaining their existing workforce and not retiring those people who have reached the age of 65. In many cases these long-tenured employees are the most valuable employees because they have been with their employer for a long time. If they are of value to the employer, the employer will want to keep the employees notwithstanding some arbitrary number of 65 years of age.

• (1250)

The second major theme in Bill C-13 is with respect to the support of communities. Certainly, it is of benefit to all municipalities, legislation of a permanent annual investment of \$2 billion in the gas tax fund to provide predictable, long-term infrastructure funding for municipalities.

The municipalities in Edmonton—St. Albert have benefited from this gas tax fund. We have major infrastructure funding in Edmonton. Road construction seems to be an ongoing issue from the month of April to October. The city of Edmonton and the province of Alberta have nearly completed an aggressive ring road system, the Anthony Henday. The federal contribution with respect to that was from the gas tax fund.

Municipalities have been asking for stable funding, so to make this a permanent annual investment allows the municipalities to plan for their future capital infrastructure needs, and I credit the Minister of Finance with that provision in Bill C-13.

The other support for communities that I want to talk about is the tax credit for volunteer firefighters. This is an important provision, perhaps not that well understood. There are some 85,000 volunteer firefighters in Canada. These are individuals in small towns and counties who voluntarily fight fires to protect the property of their neighbours. Often fires occur in the middle of the night and individuals would be called from their sleep to fight a fire.

I am sure most members of the House know that there was a terrible fire northwest of Edmonton this year in Slave Lake. That required the resources of volunteer and professional firefighters. These individuals ought to be recognized for their contribution.

Third, with regard to helping families, we are introducing the new family caregiver tax credit to assist caregivers for all types of infirm dependent relatives. This is important to allow individuals to perhaps reduce their hours or, if they are self-employed, to reduce their revenue, to take care of elderly or infirm members of their family. Their business or employment opportunities will be compromised, but it allows the infirm or elderly member to be cared for in the home as opposed to putting that individual in some sort of group home, nursing home or retirement home. Ultimately, this is a great cost savings to taxpayers when these individuals can be looked after by their own families.

The new child tax credit would allow parents to deduct a tax credit for a portion of the fees for enrolling children in dance or music. We know these things can be expensive. There is value to both children and society and to families when children are involved in those types of activities. I credit the government for recognizing that and giving a tax credit to the parents.

We are forgiving loans to new doctors and nurses in underserved rural and remote areas. The last speaker talked about the doctor shortage and it is acute, but it is especially acute in rural and remote areas. This would help encourage doctors and nurses to relocate.

*Government Orders*

Finally, the fifth theme in this legislation is the respect for taxpayers. I am honoured and proud, and I wave this flag whenever I can, at the phasing out of the direct subsidy of political parties. I really believe, as do my constituents, that political parties ought to raise their own money and the taxpayer should not be compelled to pay for political causes that they do not support or believe in.

The economic action plan has been successful. The economy is on firm ground. We have one of the strongest, if not the strongest economy in the G7, and it is the result of this government's management.

Targeted investments are a reflection of the results we can achieve while working together toward the common goal of building strong and vibrant communities. The success of Canada's economic action plan is a tribute to the partnerships between local, provincial and federal governments.

We have risen to the challenge of the worst economic downturn in half a century, and with the keeping Canada's economy and jobs growing act, Bill C-13, we will ensure a robust and durable economic recovery that will continue to keep Canadians employed and sustain Canada's economic advantage now and in the future.

● (1255)

**Mr. Jasbir Sandhu (Surrey North, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I am glad that somebody from the Conservative side realizes it is small businesses that create jobs. They are the economic engine for our country.

What really puzzles me is, if the Conservatives are to tax small businesses in the new year, how does that help small businesses? They are saying that they want to create jobs and provide a small tax credit to small businesses, but yet they are taxing small businesses. How would that help create jobs for Canadians?

**Mr. Brent Rathgeber:** Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member from British Columbia for his question and his concern for small business.

Certainly, this government, unlike the previous government, recognizes the vital role that small business plays in the economy and job creation. Tax rates have continued to be lowered by this government, both in terms of corporate tax rates for small businesses that are incorporated and also individual tax rates for the small businesses in more of self-employed situations.

I am not sure if he is talking about employment insurance premiums, but certainly that fund has had some problems given that there have been more claimants with respect to the economic downturn. The government recognizes this, hence the \$1,000 tax credit for new hires that would offset the costs of hiring new individuals.

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the bill is entitled "Keeping Canada's Economy and Jobs Growing Act". However, to look at one of the underlying statistics that was brought to our attention earlier today by the finance critic of the Liberal Party, back in August 2008, there were 14,631,000 employed and today that has dropped significantly, virtually by half a million, to 14,106,000.

Does the member not recognize that the most important issue today is jobs and the need to create jobs? Does he believe that this

budget would create the hundreds of thousands of jobs necessary to really make the difference and make up for that gap in jobs that have been lost since the government has been in office?

● (1300)

**Mr. Brent Rathgeber:** Mr. Speaker, I absolutely disagree with the premise of that question. As I said in my remarks, the government has created 600,000 jobs since the recession of 2008. Most are full-time and almost all are in the private sector. It is the government's economic policies that nurture a business environment and allows small, medium and large businesses to make the new hires. I am reticent to believe that the opposition party can criticize the government with respect to job creation when the facts are that the government's job creation is the envy of any of its industrial partners.

**Mr. LaVar Payne (Medicine Hat, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I am happy to be asking my colleague from Edmonton—St. Albert a question. He talked about the political subsidy in his speech. In my riding I hear this all the time, "Get rid of that political subsidy, the \$1.95 per vote". I want to ask my colleague, has he heard the same kind of comment from his constituents?

**Mr. Brent Rathgeber:** Mr. Speaker, I heard it loud and clear. Certainly in Edmonton—St. Albert the constituents are adamant that the \$1.95, soon to be \$2.00, per vote subsidy which costs taxpayers \$30 million on an annual basis ought to be eliminated, and thankfully it would be eliminated with Bill C-13.

Political parties, and all other voluntary organizations, ought to be able to raise their own money. Of course, there is assistance that will continue, including a 75% tax credit for donations up to a specified amount. When we are dealing with a generous tax credit system, there is no reason for a political subsidy of \$2.00 per vote. Canadians should only have to pay for and support the political parties that they support.

[Translation]

**Mrs. Sadia Groguhé (Saint-Lambert, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, many of those who spoke before me talked to the House about poverty and about Canadians who are living in very difficult situations. More and more people are relying on food banks. That is a telling indicator. From coast to coast, Canadian families are having a harder time taking care of themselves and feeding, housing or clothing themselves. The cost of living is rising higher and higher for these families, and they cannot manage to make ends meet. They are finding it even more difficult to meet these basic, fundamental needs because of the current crisis, which is rocking the foundations of the world economy.

In Canada, the gap between the rich and the less fortunate is growing. The current crisis has a particular impact on the most vulnerable people in our society, such as single-parent families, seniors, welfare recipients and the unemployed. Even people who are employed are making use of food banks.



*Government Orders*

Canada's economic and social situation is worrying. According to recent statistics, approximately 1.4 million Canadians are officially unemployed. That number is close to 2 million if we include those who have given up or are underemployed. The International Monetary Fund predicts that Canada's unemployment rate will rise this year to 7.6%. According to the projections of this financial institution, the unemployment rate will rise from 7.6% in 2011 to 7.7% in 2012 because our economy is growing more slowly than expected. This high unemployment rate is costing \$20 billion a year in lost income, not to mention the losses in terms of economic stimulus and tax revenue.

No segment of the population is immune. Youth employment is considered to be a disaster. The youth unemployment rate reached 17.3% last summer, which is an increase from the previous year and from the pre-recession unemployment rate, which was under 14%.

As we all know, Canada's current economic situation requires measures that will help reduce unemployment, create jobs and support the economy.

On September 29, 2011, in his fiscal sustainability report for 2011, the Parliamentary Budget Officer stated that Canada's fiscal structure is not sustainable over the long term. Economists and other financial experts are constantly pointing out how fragile the current economic situation is.

In order to reduce unemployment and stimulate the economy, considering how fragile the current economic situation is, we need measures that will support the economy and create jobs. Bill C-13 is completely out of touch with the problems facing Canadians. Accordingly, the measures it calls for do not address the current economic imperatives or the problems facing Canadian families, seniors and youth hit hard by unemployment.

The measures proposed in Bill C-13 are based on forecasts that no longer apply, as demonstrated by the International Monetary Fund, and on minimal-state theories that reject social programs. The measures are unrealistic and completely out of touch, not only with the real needs of Canadians, but also with the general economic situation that experts are describing as fragile and shifting. The budget proposed by the Conservatives does not even begin to respond to the needs of Canadian families, who want concrete measures to create jobs and promote economic growth. The measures proposed in Bill C-13 do nothing to address concerns about employment, improving health care for all Canadians, strengthening pensions and taking care of seniors in need. The measures set out in the bill do nothing to promote job creation.

Bill C-13 is sacrificing Canadian families while offering large corporations lavish and substantial tax reductions, which are not even conditional upon job creation. These tax credits are granted even if the corporations do not create any jobs to respond to the challenge of unemployment. In other words, the reductions serve only to reward companies that already have employees, whereas the economic recovery needs new jobs to put Canadians who are looking for employment to work.

• (1305)

Furthermore, since they are based on a certain income level, the tax credits in Bill C-13 actually benefit only a very few Canadians,

mainly wealthy individuals. They exclude many people who, because of their poverty, do not pay taxes and therefore cannot benefit from these tax credits. Seen from this perspective, it is clear the tax credit measures are just for show. For example, Bill C-13 talks about tax credits for family caregivers. Creating such a tax credit is not a sufficient response to the needs of people who take time off to take care of their loved ones who are ill, simply because they must have a sufficient level of income to be able to benefit from the tax credits set out in Bill C-13. A total of 65% of households with a caregiver declare a combined income of less than \$45,000 and 23% declare less than \$20,000. In short, most caregivers cannot benefit from the tax credits in question.

For this measure to provide direct support to caregivers, we, the NDP, are proposing that these tax credits be turned into tax credits for caregivers. That is a concrete measure that responds to genuine needs. And that is why a number of members who spoke before me have proposed that the child disability benefit be used as a model. Caregivers would receive a monthly non-taxable amount that would help them cover the costs associated with taking care of a sick family member. This type of credit would be of particular help to low- and middle-income caregivers.

Another example from Bill C-13 is the tax credit for medical expenses. This credit allows Canadians to claim medical expenses that are not covered by the public health system. But the problem is that this measure does not fix the underlying issue in its entirety—Canadians with excessive medical expenses that are not covered by our public health system cannot recover all the expenses they incur.

The NDP is calling upon the government to listen to the needs of Canadians by creating a national pharmacare program, which would reimburse Canadians for all their medical expenses.

This same inconsistency exists with the children's arts tax credit. Where will people who already have a hard time feeding themselves find \$500 to invest in arts activities to benefit from this credit? The measure proposed by Bill C-13 regarding the partial forgiveness of student loans for doctors and nurses raises the same questions.

Canadian families deserve better. They want concrete action to create jobs and fix the economy, not the Conservative government's half measures. Concrete measures need to be taken—ones that target the real job creators—instead of tax cuts being handed to big business.

### Government Orders

According to the IMF, long-term, stable economic growth depends on equitable revenue distribution. In light of the objections I have raised, we believe that Bill C-13 does not contain enough measures to support the economy and jobs in Canada. It should be rejected, pure and simple.

• (1310)

[English]

**Mr. Wayne Marston (Hamilton East—Stoney Creek, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, the speech of the member was very well-informed. We repeatedly hear about tax credits from the other side, but they are non-refundable tax credits. They are half measures.

Let me give an example of another half measure. Last year the Conservatives were pushing us to pass the \$50.00 a month they were going to give to seniors on GIS. When we consider that someone living on GIS and old age security gets \$15,200 a year and the poverty line is \$22,000 a year, what the Conservatives did last year was half of a half measure of what was needed. What is needed for a quarter million seniors in the country is at least a \$200 a month increase, not half of that half measure.

[Translation]

**Mrs. Sadia Groguhé:** Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his comments. I back him completely with regard to the \$50 per year increase. I have spoken to seniors who have been truly shocked by that amount. They told me outright that it does not do much for them.

[English]

**Mr. Jasbir Sandhu (Surrey North, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, my colleague's speech on Bill C-13 was very thoughtful. We have talked about small businesses being the economic engine that drives our economy and creates jobs. We know for a fact that the Conservatives are going to tax small businesses through the payroll tax.

Would my colleague comment on how it will hurt small businesses in her constituency and whether taxing small businesses is a good idea?

[Translation]

**Mrs. Sadia Groguhé:** Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his question.

In fact, the hiring credit in Bill C-13 will not help at all to create jobs. Furthermore, the status quo for taxes on small business will have a serious impact on their budgeting and will not create new jobs. Small businesses in my riding are asking for assistance. Keeping these taxes will not help small and medium-sized businesses at all.

**Mr. Hoang Mai (Brossard—La Prairie, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask my colleague a question. The government says it is open and wants to adapt its plans to reality, and is proposing this plan. What concrete results has she seen in her riding or on the economy?

**Mrs. Sadia Groguhé:** Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my colleague for his question. Earlier he talked about something that I think is essential and that is to have a vision. That is what is missing from this budget: vision. Concretely, in my riding, there are families in need who are likely to turn to food banks for help. Last week I was in my riding all week and able to interact with agency representatives

and families. Unfortunately, even those who are currently employed have to get help from charitable organizations to feed their families. In that sense, I think this budget lacks a great deal of vision.

• (1315)

[English]

**Mr. John Williamson (New Brunswick Southwest, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I rise today in favour of our government's keeping Canada's economy and jobs growing act.

[Translation]

Our government has remained squarely focused on the economy during these turbulent economic times and we have been getting results for Canadians. For instance, approximately 650,000 more Canadians are working today than in July 2009.

[English]

In the IMF and OECD forecast our economy will continue to be among the strongest in the G7 this year and next. When we consider what is happening around the world, that is a positive accomplishment. What is more, only recently *Forbes* magazine ranked Canada as the best place in the world for businesses to grow and create jobs.

[Translation]

Canadians can be confident their country is better positioned to face global economic challenges than most and that our government will remain focused on what matters to Canadians: jobs and the economy.

[English]

Focusing on the economy and helping Canadian families is exactly what we are doing through the keeping Canada's economy and jobs growing act. This key legislation would ensure we can keep moving forward in implementing Canada's economic action plan to grow the economy and create jobs.

[Translation]

The plan has been well received in my home province. For instance, the Conseil économique du Nouveau-Brunswick has called it, "far-sighted with provisions to help small and medium-size businesses increase and retain their workforce".

[English]

As well, Doug Northrup, H&R Block tax professional in New Brunswick and a Moncton *Times & Transcript* personal finance columnist, called it "a people budget with new credits that will help families and seniors get more money back".



*Government Orders**[Translation]*

I would like to highlight a few of the important measures in the bill at this moment.

*[English]*

First, recognizing the need for new family physicians, nurse practitioners and nurses to practise or work in underserved rural or remote communities, we are introducing the medical graduates loan forgiveness initiative. This plan would forgive a portion of Canada student loans for new family physicians, nurse practitioners and nurses who worked in rural or remote communities.

Starting in 2012, new family physicians practising in such communities would be eligible for a federal Canada student loan forgiveness of up to \$8,000 per year to a maximum of \$40,000. New nurse practitioners and nurses practising in underserved rural or remote communities would be eligible for forgiveness of up to \$4,000 a year to a maximum of \$20,000.

*[Translation]*

Another measure I would like to highlight is the volunteer firefighters tax credit.

*[English]*

Another important measure I will highlight is the volunteer firefighters tax credit. This measure is long overdue and it recognizes the hard work of men and women in communities across the country. Volunteer firefighters play a critical role in serving communities across Canada, including in my riding of New Brunswick Southwest, often putting themselves at risk for the safety of their neighbours. Often, in rural and remote communities, these volunteer firefighters are the first responders at the site of home fires or accidents on roads. Across the country, nearly 85,000 volunteer firefighters provide their services to protect the lives of Canadians and they deserve our gratitude and support. That is why this act includes a volunteer firefighters tax credit in the amount of \$3,000. This is a positive measure that has been welcomed across the country, including in my home province, as a tool to ensure we retain our volunteer firefighters.

The New Brunswick Association of Fire Chiefs declared:

...the tax credit is also an important tool when it comes to recruitment and retention. We feel that retaining volunteers that are already in place is even more important almost...because you've already invested money into those volunteers. So you want to keep them on and keep them as long as you can. Retention with some of the smaller volunteer fire departments is a big deal.

In my riding there are a lot of these small fire departments and this support is welcome.

Another measure I will highlight is supporting infrastructure in Canada by legislating that the gas tax fund transfer be permanent.

• (1320)

*[Translation]*

As we know, Canada's economic action plan has helped accelerate and expand federal investments in infrastructure. The actions we took helped Canada deal with the global economic turbulence in the short term, with more modern infrastructure for the long term.

*[English]*

Canada's historic investment in infrastructure, like improving our roads, bridges or, in my riding, wharves, will continue to support jobs and growth beyond the economic downturn. Announced in budget 2007, the seven year building Canada plan consists of programs to meet varying infrastructure needs across the country, including the gas tax fund and a full rebate of the goods and services tax paid by municipalities. Through the gas tax fund, the Government of Canada provides \$2 billion annually to support municipal infrastructure. Today's act proposes to legislate a permanent annual transfer, through the gas tax fund, to provide predictable, long-term infrastructure funding to Canada's cities and towns. This means that this funding would be taken away from the hands of politicians, I suppose, to use it as a political football, thereby guaranteeing it to municipalities so that it would be there year in and year out.

We all know that state of the art infrastructure moves people, goods and services safely and reliably. It improves business competitiveness, allowing the economy to grow and prosper, and it also enhances the quality of life of Canadians.

*[Translation]*

The Canadian Taxpayers Federation—a group I am very familiar with—has applauded this move, noting, “making the Gas Tax Transfer permanent is a clear follow-through on a longstanding taxpayer priority. This will ensure that more gas tax revenues go back into roads”.

*[English]*

That is a good measure and one that is long overdue.

A final point that I will highlight is our Conservative government's commitment to return to balanced budgets through the responsible spending of taxpayer dollars. We are committed to principled, effective fiscal management through a detailed review of all government spending.

*[Translation]*

Nevertheless, prudent fiscal management also means leading by example and that includes political parties. That is why today's bill phases out the costly per-vote subsidy to political parties, which forced taxpayers to support political parties rather than political parties receiving donations voluntarily from Canadians.

*[English]*

We firmly believe that Canadians demand that their tax dollars be treated with great care and only used in the public interest, in good times as well as in turbulent economic times. As such, I believe this move to end the political party subsidies has been and will be applauded by Canadians from coast to coast.

Again, the Taxpayers Federation said:

Eliminating the per-vote subsidy is a major victory in the fight against political welfare. ...this is major win for taxpayers and for democratic reform.

### Government Orders

Another plug is from the *Calgary Herald* editorial. It remarked:

Phasing out the subsidy also forces political parties to do their own fundraising, while asking Canadians to back up their beliefs by putting their hard-earned dollars behind the parties they support.

Here in Ontario, a *Kingston Whig Standard* editorial heralded it as well when it stated:

If people want to advance a political agenda, let them work to finance the means to get elected. If it appeals to people, they will support it.

It's time politicians and their skills learned how to earn our support, not merely expect it.

[Translation]

While I only highlighted a few measures of today's act, there are many more.

[English]

The keeping Canada's economy and jobs growing act recognizes the need to focus on the economy for the short and long term. I would therefore encourage all members of the House to support this key legislation.

[Translation]

**Mr. Hoang Mai (Brossard—La Prairie, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the hon. member for his speech.

The hon. member talked about investing in infrastructure. We know that there is a \$130 billion deficit in infrastructure. The Minister of Finance says investing in infrastructure is five times more effective than cutting the corporate tax rate. Could the hon. member explain why the government is making more cuts to the corporate tax rate instead of investing in infrastructure?

• (1325)

[English]

**Mr. John Williamson:** Mr. Speaker, like any good economic policy, a government needs to look at different levers when it sets the fiscal plan every year. We can point to countries throughout Europe, some of which are in big trouble today. They have wonderful infrastructure but lousy tax structures. As a result, they do not receive the investment, jobs or growth that is important to ensuring a high standard of living.

If the member is suggesting that we put all our eggs into building only infrastructure and we do not deal with reducing the tax burden on businesses to create jobs, he has a thing or two to learn. Bringing down taxes will ensure job creation going forward and ensure we have good roads so that our goods can get to and from market.

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, it is always encouraging when we hear a moment of truth from the Conservative government.

I will quote something from October 12, which I am sure my colleagues on the other side will appreciate. It is from the President of the Treasury Board. The article reads:

...is crediting much of Canada's current economic success to actions taken long before his government came to power, telling a Washington business crowd Wednesday that Canada made the right moves when faced with serious debt troubles of its own in 1995.

I applaud the President of the Treasury Board for acknowledging the role that the Liberal Party played in terms of protecting Canada's economy today.

Would the member not acknowledge that there is so much more good advice coming from the Liberal Party that, if acted upon by the government, it would create a lot more jobs in Canada?

**Mr. John Williamson:** Mr. Speaker, that is an excellent point. No political party and no government has a monopoly on good ideas. If opposition parties want to propose them, we will certainly listen to them.

I wrote a piece in the past that credited both Preston Manning and Jean Chrétien for the good state the country's finances were in. I credited Preston Manning in opposition for putting the heat on the government of the day under Mr. Chrétien and Mr. Chrétien for enacting the ideas.

Why the opposition today would want to raise taxes and spend wildly, I do not know. I think that explains in part why the third party today is no longer the government.

**Mr. Brad Butt (Mississauga—Streetsville, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I compliment my very learned friend across the aisle. I know that his background prior to coming here was a tax fighter and he deserves to be congratulated for bringing that skill and knowledge to the House of Commons.

Perhaps he could detail, in a little more specific way, why targeted tax cuts and tax credit initiatives that are in this legislation are important in affecting general behaviour in different sectors that actually help build and grow the economy and for employers to retain and hire new people. Why are targeted tax credits like this so important?

**Mr. John Williamson:** Mr. Speaker, over the last five years, our government, particularly on the personal income tax side, has used a number of tax credits and incentives to encourage certain activities. The example of our volunteer firefighters tax credit is a perfect one, whereby we are trying to ensure that these organizations continue to exist throughout the country, thereby saving government money from having to fill in were these volunteers to suddenly disappear.

Similarly, we have seen other measures on trades people, for example, to lower their taxes in their day-to-day pursuit of jobs and opportunities.

We must not forget that when it comes to business taxes, we have actually picked up on reforms that were begun by the Liberal government, which is to keep putting the business tax down to 15%, a broad tax that favours all businesses in this country and encourages them to come here and create jobs.

• (1330)

**Mr. Ray Boughen (Palliser, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to speak to Bill C-13, an act to implement certain provisions of the 2011 budget.



*Government Orders*

As we navigate through these troubled economic waters, this is a sound budget to maintain our fiscal advantage while offering Canadians the support to enhance their quality of life. I fully support this budget for its measures to create jobs and economic growth to support hard-working Canadians while maintaining Canada's fiscal advantage.

Throughout this period of economic instability, Canada has received many international accolades for its relatively sound fiscal position. I would like to mention a few of these accolades to show that our economic plan is working and should be continued.

First, for the third straight year, the World Economic Forum has ranked Canada's banking system as the strongest in the world. Second, Canada made headlines recently as *Forbes* magazine ranked Canada number one as the best place to do business worldwide. Third, the International Monetary Fund recently declared that Canada's overall fiscal outlook is the best in the G20. What is more, Canada has had seven straight quarters of economic growth, which is quite remarkable considering the economic instability worldwide.

I congratulate the finance minister for the leadership role he has played in the excellent financial management of Canada. "Canada's low tax plan has created a healthy economic environment for business investment and we applaud the government for staying the course," said the Canadian Chamber of Commerce, which represents business across the country.

Our government is fully aware that to employ people we need to create a favourable climate for business, and we are doing our best to create favourable climates throughout the country. Measures include tax credits to hire new staff and a reduction in red tape. Support for the hiring credit comes from the Canadian Federation of Agriculture which stated that it will help farm operators that are looking to expand. Speaking of creating favourable climates for business, our government is reducing the red tape that impedes economic growth.

Businesses like Yanke, a Saskatchewan based trucking company, will benefit from reduced bureaucratic hurdles. Recently, Yanke announced that it will be building a transportation and logistics centre, a hub which will bring between 400 and 500 truckloads per week and 40 new jobs to the Regina area. A couple of weeks ago, Alliance Grain Traders announced it will build a pasta processing plant that will employ 60 full-time employees upon completion.

Companies like Yanke and Alliance Grain Traders are able to expand operations which require additional staff because the conditions in Canada are favourable for expansion.

I am proud to say, as my colleagues have said, that 600,000 net new jobs have been created since July 2009. I am especially proud to say that Saskatchewan boasts full employment. It has the lowest unemployment rate in the country at 4%, with 5% being considered full employment. Our low tax plan for jobs and growth is working.

I would like to speak for a moment about how the bill will help communities. Having previously been involved with the municipal government, I realize the challenges involved in funding infrastructure. For this reason, I am pleased our government is investing \$2 billion in the gas tax fund. This will provide predictable long-term infrastructure funding for municipalities. Regina, Moose Jaw, and

the 11 rural municipalities in my riding will be able to develop long-term plans to fix roads, build power plants, repair bridges and water treatment facilities, and do many other projects. This funding will replace aging infrastructure for the health and safety of Canadians while reducing the municipal tax load that families carry. I call that a good plan.

• (1335)

Let me take a moment to talk about benefits for the agriculture industry. A significant portion of my riding revolves around the agriculture sector. Whether directly or indirectly, Bill C-13 contains measures that will promote sustainable agriculture through targeted assistance to support innovation and long-term profitability. This includes an investment of \$50 million over two years to support innovations. Farmers from Caronport to Rouleau to Mossbank and across western Canada will benefit from innovations created through this funding in the years to come.

Let me talk about seniors. Seniors have shaped a generation. They fought for our freedom and built the foundation of our country. We introduced pension splitting a couple of years ago which helped Canadian seniors better manage their finances. Additionally, we have removed over 85,000 seniors from the tax rolls and increased the age credit amount by \$2,000. Now, to further support seniors, we are enhancing the guaranteed income supplement for low income seniors to the tune of about \$600 for seniors who are single and \$840 for couples. The Canadian Labour Congress encouraged this measure and our government listened. It stated that enhancing the guaranteed income supplement is a win for every senior living in Canada.

To further improve the quality of life for seniors, we are expanding the new horizons for seniors program. The extra funding for this program will help ensure that seniors benefit from activities to maintain active and social lives.

Canadians are living longer and much healthier lives than a generation ago, and as a result, remain capable past 65 years of age. I perhaps more than anyone else in the House believe that individuals should not be required to retire at age 65 if they can still do the job competently. Since being elected in 2008, I have taken great pride in being able to help businesses, seniors, youth and hard-working people in my riding with their issues and concerns. Our seniors are a valuable commodity and deserve to be treated as such. I very much support the elimination of this outdated age requirement.

We are continuing to increase support for seniors as shown through these measures.

*Government Orders*

Let me take a minute to talk about how Bill C-13 would have a positive impact on education.

Our government recognizes the economic benefits that come with investing in education and training. Having been involved in the education system for many years, I am pleased that our government is taking real steps to improve the financial stability of Canadian students as they pursue post-secondary studies. Through Bill C-13, our government is enhancing and expanding access and eligibility for student loans and grants for full-time and part-time secondary students.

Our government realizes there is a shortage of skilled labour and we are offering tax relief with respect to occupational, trade and professional examination fees.

Our government realizes that today's students are tomorrow's leaders and need support to realize their potential.

We are committed to a responsible, credible approach to balancing the budget by 2014-15 in a manner that will create greater efficiency and effectiveness within the operation of government and the many services it provides. We will do this without raising taxes, and without slashing transfer payments to health, education and support for seniors.

Measures included in the bill would help ensure the Canadian government is supporting Canadians as we work our way out of the economic crisis and into a period of sustained economic growth while maintaining a relatively strong fiscal advantage.

I hope all members of the House will join me in supporting this important budget which provides help to Canadians. I look forward to a continuing discussion of this bill.

[Translation]

**Mr. Hoang Mai (Brossard—La Prairie, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the member opposite for his speech.

I have some questions for him about the current state of affairs. The government says we are staying on course and that everything is just fine. However, 1.4 million Canadians are still out of work. If we count those who have given up and are no longer looking for work, there are 1.7 million Canadians without work. The government says it is addressing the matter, but why is it not using our proposals to resolve this problem and investing more in infrastructure and helping small businesses?

● (1340)

[English]

**Mr. Ray Boughen:** Mr. Speaker, we need to support our industrial base and we need to increase employment. We understand that.

We will hear many speakers from this side of the House talk about how the economy is very fragile, and it is. Employment is also fragile but we are working hard to change that. Let me mention a new program starting at the SIAST Wascana campus. This program teaches young people to be plumbers. It has just seen the light of day in the last couple of months. It is an attempt to promote training and education for people so that they can find employment in today's economy.

We are aware of what the member has said and we are working hard to alleviate that particular need.

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the Conservatives and Liberals agree on one aspect of this bill, which is the volunteer firefighters tax credit. We recognize the valuable contributions our volunteer firefighters make. Where we tend to disagree is that the Liberal Party believes that volunteer firefighters at a low-income threshold should also get a tax benefit. According to the bill, the government would penalize low-income volunteer firefighters.

Does the member see the value in recognizing all volunteer firefighters, including those with a low income?

**Mr. Ray Boughen:** Mr. Speaker, we are certainly aware that the bill needs some work in terms of some things that may not be totally covered. We are aware there is some discrepancy with respect to that part of the bill. We will certainly look at that and cover the bases so that all will be treated fairly.

**Mrs. Stella Ambler (Mississauga South, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, we all know that the first phase of Canada's economic action plan was a huge success for Canada. Almost 600,000 jobs have been created since July 2009 and in the category of economic growth, Canada is the best of all the G7 countries.

My hon. colleague from Palliser knows his community well. Could he tell us how the next phase of Canada's economic action plan would impact his community and how the good things in that plan would help the people in his community and all of Canada?

**Mr. Ray Boughen:** Mr. Speaker, we realize there are many needs to deal with, particularly in infrastructure. Canada's economic action plan has supplied funding for a number of projects. One that comes to mind and which is just being completed is the overpass on Highway 1 which ties into Lewvan Drive in Regina. This overpass is necessary because of increased traffic, particularly freight traffic that will find its way to the international terminal west of the city.

Projects that received funding in phase one of the economic action plan are now coming to completion. Those projects will alleviate a lot of problems for people and will increase productivity for our province.

[Translation]

**Mr. Massimo Pacetti (Saint-Léonard—Saint-Michel, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise in the House today to debate Bill C-13. This bill implements certain provisions of the 2011 budget.

I am sad to see that the Conservatives are once again showing their lack of respect for our democratic institutions and for Canadians by imposing strict time limits on the debate. The Conservatives' arrogance is an insult to Canadians, more than 60% of whom did not vote for their narrow ideology that defies reason and facts.



*Government Orders*

The Liberal Party cannot support this bill because it contains a significant number of inadequacies in its current form. With this bill the Conservatives are deliberately excluding low-income Canadians from measures such as the family caregiver tax credit, the volunteer firefighters tax credit and the children's arts tax credit.

How can low-income families and individuals benefit from a non-refundable tax credit when quite often, they do not have enough income to be taxed? Why are the Conservatives choosing to exclude the most vulnerable among us at a time when the economy is so precarious?

For example, if people quit their jobs to take care of loved ones at home, how will they take advantage of a tax credit when they have no income? There are many more examples of how these proposed measures will not benefit those who need them most.

The main problem with this bill has to do with the fact that to be eligible for most of the measures, there is a minimum income threshold. The Conservatives decided to play petty politics with tax credits instead of making them refundable so that low-income Canadians could also benefit, as we proposed. That shows once again that this Conservative government is ignoring Canadians in need.

The Liberal Party wants to work with the government to improve this bill, but it also understands that the Conservatives never listen to the advice of the House or the Canadian public. This government must start working on the problems facing Canadians instead of creating conflicts. A responsible government would not choose winners and losers. It would not choose to ignore a large segment of the population. It would not choose to ignore facts and reason for ideological purposes.

A number of other measures in this bill do not serve Canadian interests and demonstrate that this government has mishandled many issues. Take, for example, the higher charges being imposed on Ontario and Quebec softwood lumber exporters. A few years ago, the Conservative government tried to buy peace with our American forestry competitors, at a cost of \$1 billion. Here we are today, forced to comply with the London Court of International Arbitration ruling of January 21, 2011, and increase taxes on this sector of our economy, which continues to be targeted by U.S. trade claims despite the \$1 billion already wasted.

The higher charges that Ontario and Quebec exporters will have to face is another demonstration of poor Conservative management. Why does this government prefer to placate Washington instead of standing up for the Canadian workers it is supposed to represent? More than \$1 billion has been wasted already, yet the Conservatives have decided to kowtow to the United States once again.

In addition, certain credits set out in this bill are completely ineffective. For example, the small business hiring credit aims to compensate for an increase in employment insurance premiums for some small and medium-size businesses. The problem is that this credit is taxable and is capped at \$1,000. To obtain this credit, the business must have paid higher employment insurance premiums in 2011 than in 2010, as long as the 2010 amount was \$10,000 or less. Because of these restrictions, the credit targets very small businesses as opposed to all small and medium-size businesses.

• (1345)

For instance, a small business that employs 11 people, each earning \$38,000, would be too large to qualify. Based on our calculations, approximately 600,000 small and medium-sized businesses could not take advantage of the credit, which is just another example of this government's petty politics that do nothing to help Canadians.

On top of all that, let us not forget that the Conservatives also announced they want to increase EI premiums by 5.6% in January 2012. Because of that increase, a business with 10 employees, each earning an annual salary of \$40,000, would have to pay \$800 more in EI premiums next year. In short, any amount left over from the credit will all be clawed back in taxes and increased EI premiums.

The Conservative government seems to be trying to fool Canadians by offering just a few small and medium-sized businesses a hiring credit, when it knows very well that that amount will be taken back in full. This is so typical of the Conservatives: lots of hoopla, with no real results—except for their friends. Instead of giving tax breaks to wealthy corporations that are eliminating jobs in Canada, why not give real tax credits to our small and medium-sized businesses that are creating jobs in Canada?

Another weak point in this bill relates to the gas tax fund. The provisions of that section place a \$2 billion limit on annual transfers to municipalities for infrastructure projects. That very fund was created in 2004 by the previous Liberal government, which had, at the time, made provisions for that \$2 billion limit to be increased in order to account for inflation and population growth, things that this Conservative government is choosing to ignore. The amount set out in this bill does not correspond to today's reality and does not provide all the help the municipalities need to address the infrastructure deficit, which the Federation of Canadian Municipalities now estimates at \$123 billion.

Municipalities—perhaps with the exception of Muskoka—are suffering, and the government is not taking their needs into account. If we consider the facts that municipalities have been growing since 2004, that costs are increasing as a result of inflation, and that our infrastructure is crumbling, as we have unfortunately seen with the Champlain Bridge in Montreal, setting a \$2 billion limit now is illogical.

The transfer to municipalities should have been increased in order to take demographic growth and inflation into account; instead, the government preferred to load an additional burden on the backs of municipalities in a typically Conservative manner, namely, without consultation, without debate and without a logical rationale.

*Government Orders*

Another problematic section is that pertaining to the Canadian securities regulator. The Canadian Securities Transition Office was supposed to be a temporary body set up to establish the permanent organization; however, under Bill C-13, Parliament will have to allocate additional funds to maintain this transition office. By so doing, the Conservatives are trying to force the provinces to accept what they want rather than working with the provinces to implement a functional regulatory system from coast to coast.

If the government wants to show good faith, it will take into account the proposals of the Liberal Party and Canadians. These simple and realistic proposals could easily be implemented. However, by limiting the debate on this 642-page bill to 15 seconds per page, the government is showing that it does not care about debate or about the reasonable proposals that Canadians and the opposition are making. This is an insult to Canadians who do not support the Conservative agenda. Given the current economic situation, we cannot abandon those in need.

• (1350)

The Liberal Party thus commits to defending those whom this government neglects. We cannot support Bill C-13 until the many deficiencies we have pointed out have been fixed.

[English]

**Mr. John Williamson (New Brunswick Southwest, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, we hear a lot these days about taxing the rich and making the rich pay, and the member touched on that in his speech. I would like to point out that there is a lot talk about tax credits that are offered to people who actually do not pay tax.

In light of the fact that the top 10% of income earners in our country, which begins at \$80,000, pays 57% of all income taxes, the top 25% of income earners, which begins at \$50,000, pays 82% of all federal income receipts, does the member believe that when tax cuts or tax relief is offered, it should go primarily to people who actually pay taxes, as opposed to being handed out to people who do not pay taxes in the form of spending?

• (1355)

**Mr. Massimo Pacetti:** Mr. Speaker, I did not have a chance in my speech to discuss taxes and the amount of taxes being paid by individuals. The only remark I made in my speech was that the large corporations were getting the tax breaks in this budget instead of all Canadians getting a tax break.

The challenge of any government, and it does not have to be a right-wing ideology-driven government like the Conservative government, is that it does not have to just give tax breaks to the people who voted for them. The challenge is to help everybody, the most in need.

In times like these, when people are having a hard time making ends meet, those are the people who should be helped. There are proposals for non-refundable tax credits. The tax credits have to be refundable or they are not effective.

**Mr. Jasbir Sandhu (Surrey North, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, it is very clear that everyone on both sides of the House understands that small businesses drive the economy and create over 50% of the jobs. Yet we have the Conservative government proposing to tax small

businesses in the new year with the payroll tax. How would this affect small businesses in his riding?

**Mr. Massimo Pacetti:** Mr. Speaker, I mentioned in my speech that the number of companies that would be eligible for the new hires program would be very minimal. It is supposed to be geared toward small business enterprises, but it will actually only help a few very small businesses with less than 10 employees.

What will be the repercussion? Even if they were eligible to get the \$1,000 maximum eligible tax credit, it would be taxable and then it would be offset by an increase in employment premiums.

The small businesses in my riding will not be any further ahead.

**Ms. Joyce Murray (Vancouver Quadra, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, my colleague spoke very convincingly about municipalities and the need for more infrastructure support. That ties really strongly into small business needs.

In rural Canada, in particular, municipal governments, small business and tourism work very closely together. What would my colleague recommend in terms of small business requirements when he thinks about municipal infrastructure investments?

**Mr. Massimo Pacetti:** Mr. Speaker, why do I always get the toughest questions from the Liberals?

We have been saying that basically we do not need to reduce the taxes on large corporations to keep the incentives.

A tourism tax credit was eliminated by the government, and it has been proven that tourism has gone down because of that. Small businesses are suffering because they are normally open longer than the big corporations.

There is general discontent among small businesses in our country because the government is not doing enough for them.

**Mr. Harold Albrecht (Kitchener—Conestoga, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I listened with interest to my colleague. It was evident that he was very negative about the great measures in the bill.

He forgot to mention the 650,000 new jobs that have been created. He tried to take credit for the \$2 billion tax incentive for municipalities. That was \$1 billion. We have doubled it and made it permanent.

Most of all, I cannot understand why he would avoid mentioning the tax credit to assist caregivers. He is trying to make it look like we are not compassionate for people who are caregivers. That is clearly a part of Bill C-13. I would like him to comment on that.

**Mr. Massimo Pacetti:** Mr. Speaker, my speech was given in French, but members will be able to read it in English tomorrow.

There is no problem with the caregivers tax credit. It just does not help the people who actually need it. It does not go far enough. That is what we are saying.



The Conservatives did not create the 600,000 jobs the member is saying they created. Those are part-time jobs. We were in Europe and spoke to the OECD. It is worried about the number of unemployed people in Canada. This is a big worry.

My Conservative colleague should get his head out of the sand and do something for the economy.

## STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

• (1400)

[English]

### NATIONAL ALL BUFFLEHEADS DAY

**Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP):** Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to share good news with the House that members of my community, over 100 strong, gathered on Saturday, October 15 to celebrate two important milestones, the 80th anniversary of the creation of the Shoal Harbour protected area and the re-emergence and punctual arrival of the little Bufflehead duck.

We have now created in local Saanich—Gulf Islands, through the Sidney town proclamation and the North Saanich town proclamation, an All Buffleheads Day for October 15. This is our “Hinterland's Who's Who” moment since I share with my colleagues that this little duck is a rapid diver, a tree nester and punctual, returning from its migrations all across Canada within a day or two of October 15.

I urge colleagues to join me when I put forward a private member's bill that October 15 should henceforth be National All Buffleheads Day.

\* \* \*

### PEACE COUNTRY HARVEST

**Mr. Chris Warkentin (Peace River, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I stand in the House today to pay tribute to the countless farm families in the Peace Country who are diligently working to complete this autumn's harvest.

This past week I travelled the Peace Country and met with many producers who are significantly behind in bringing in their crops as they have been hampered by wet weather conditions and in some cases by the sheer volume of the crops that need to be brought in.

In an effort to complete this year's harvest, I know that every member of every farm family will be working to get the job done. I want to wish every Peace Country family safety as they work around the clock. I hope and pray alongside each of them for good weather to enable the completion of this year's harvest.

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[Translation]

### BERTRAND LAFONTAINE

**Mr. Marc-André Morin (Laurentides—Labelle, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to take this opportunity to thank community workers, who are very important to our society at this time.

### Statements by Members

We live in a world that seems to be increasingly unjust. Wealth is concentrated in the hands of a few while more and more people are being left behind. Fortunately, there are generous people who put aside their own comfort and interest to help the disadvantaged.

Today, I would like to recognize in particular a resident of Saint-Sauveur, Mr. Bertrand Lafontaine. Since 2006, after a brilliant career in business, Mr. Lafontaine has devoted all his time to the Soupe populaire de la vallée de Saint-Sauveur, an organization that provides meals for the lonely and the needy. After five years, Mr. Lafontaine is retiring for the second time in order to enjoy life a bit. I hope his example will inspire those who follow in his footsteps.

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[English]

### FOOD FOR FAMINE SOCIETY

**Mr. Mark Warawa (Langley, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I rise today to bring attention to the House and all Canadians that in my riding of Langley, British Columbia there is an exciting event happening as a result of yesterday's United Nations World Food Day.

At Langley Secondary School students are hearing about the plight of children in many parts of the world, such as the Horn of Africa. Tragically, children are dying every day due to extreme malnutrition.

A Langley organization, the Food For Famine Society, in partnership with World Vision Canada, is challenging secondary students and the community to raise awareness and to raise funds so that the Food For Famine Society can produce and provide ready-to-use therapeutic food free of charge to the starving children.

This is a great example of how Canadians of all walks of life are making a wonderful difference in our world. Way to go, Langley.

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### NATIONAL SCHOOL MEALS PROGRAM

**Ms. Kirsty Duncan (Etobicoke North, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, yesterday was World Food Day, a time to reflect on the needs of Canadians. One in five children lives below the poverty line, which may lead to poor nutritional status and poor child health outcomes.

Fortunately, school nutrition programs are highly effective in providing children with nutritious diets, better cognitive abilities and health. Unfortunately, Canada is one of the few developed countries without a national nutrition program.

Outside North America school meals are viewed as an investment, rather than a cost, improving student nutrition, health and social development, and feeding regional economic development.

In Brazil, food is a constitutional right. A massive program feeds 47 million students at 190,000 schools each day.

If a national school meals program could be implemented in Canada's high schools at a cost of \$1.25 per meal, with a goal of increasing graduation rates by 3%, the payback would be more than \$500 million.

*Statements by Members*

● (1405)

**WAR OF 1812**

**Mr. Dave Van Kesteren (Chatham-Kent—Essex, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, on Friday, October 14, along with my colleague from Lambton—Kent—Middlesex, I attended an important announcement highlighting the investment made by our government to commemorate the bicentennial of the War of 1812.

The important Battle of Thames took place in my riding of Chatham-Kent—Essex. British and aboriginal forces fought to repel the American invasion. We remember the brave Shawnee Chief Tecumseh who died there.

Our government has received a strong mandate from Canadians to remember these important historical events. It has earmarked \$28 million to help us celebrate the 200th anniversary by designating October 2012 as a month of commemoration, sponsoring hundreds of events across the country, honouring current Canadian regiments and War of 1812 militia units, restoring important historical sites, and creating a permanent monument in the capital region.

I am proud that my riding of Chatham-Kent—Essex is an important part of the celebrations to be held across Canada commemorating the War of 1812.

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*[Translation]***VIATEUR BEAUDRY**

**Mr. Jonathan Tremblay (Montmorency—Charlevoix—Haute-Côte-Nord, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to recognize the incredible performance of Viateur Beaudry from Baie-Saint-Paul, who earned two medals at the 2011 Special Olympics in Athens. With determination, perseverance and skill, Mr. Beaudry won the gold medal in doubles bowling, with his partner Dwight Safroniuk of Saskatoon, and the silver medal in singles bowling at the most prestigious international competition in the world.

Mr. Beaudry was one of 109 Canadian athletes who qualified for this year's games, which welcomed 7,500 athletes representing 185 countries.

On behalf of the people of Montmorency—Charlevoix—Haute-Côte-Nord, I congratulate Mr. Beaudry on this outstanding achievement. His success is both a source of pride and an example of how individuals can overcome challenges.

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*[English]***RESTAURANT INDUSTRY**

**Mr. Joe Preston (Elgin—Middlesex—London, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, tomorrow an important segment of our economy is meeting here in Ottawa for the first ever restaurant industry summit.

As a restaurant owner myself and having been involved in the industry for over 40 years, I am proud of the contribution that restaurants make to help strengthen the Canadian economy. The numbers are impressive: \$61 billion in annual sales; one million employees; 80,000 locations.

The restaurant industry is the fourth largest private sector employer in Canada. What is even more exciting about this industry is that it is the number one source of first time jobs for young Canadians.

I applaud our nation's hard-working restaurateurs for creating jobs, driving demand in agriculture products and for attracting tourists to our country.

I look forward to our government continuing to work together with this valuable industry as we look to strengthen our economy. We thank all restaurateurs for the jobs they create and the vital role they play in our communities.

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**CANADIAN WHEAT BOARD**

**Mr. David Anderson (Cypress Hills—Grasslands, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, it is a thrill for western Canadians to hear that our government is finally moving toward giving them the same rights and opportunities as other Canadian farmers, the right to grow, the right to market and the right to sell their own crops. We have waited decades for this day.

Farmers have finally received the good news that our government will keep its promise to give them marketing freedom. The future is bright. We already know that entrepreneurs are ready to invest, farmers are ready to market and value-added jobs are just around the corner.

Farmers paid the price when the board was forced on them and they have been paying for it ever since. That has gone on far too long. It is time to give real choice and freedom to western Canadian farmers.

The western provinces have been held back by the Wheat Board. We invite the members across the way to join with us in bringing freedom to western Canada.

Make no mistake that the government's actions will result in more investment and innovation in western Canada. It will result in value-added jobs and a stronger economy.

I ask the opposition to join with us in bringing western Canadian farmers the same freedom the rest of Canada already has.

\* \* \*

● (1410)

**L.V. ROGERS SECONDARY SCHOOL**

**Mr. Alex Atamanenko (British Columbia Southern Interior, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I rise today to give special recognition to the students at L.V. Rogers Secondary School in Nelson, B.C. for doing their part to improve our country and secure our future.

These creative students have partnered with the community and film industry professionals to produce a feature film about climate change called *Project Turquoise Snowflake*. I urge my hon. colleagues to contact me for more information about this film.



Throughout this experience the message has been clear to those involved in the film and to all Canadians: all is possible when the energy and enthusiasm of youth is mixed with the experience and guidance of supportive mentors.

Climate change is an opportunity for all Canadians to work together to effect positive change.

Margaret Mead commended small groups of thoughtful, committed citizens who can change the world.

Indeed, we can find one such group at L.V. Rogers Secondary School in Nelson, British Columbia, one of the many bright spots in my riding.

Well done, LVR.

\* \* \*

**CLAY CARD, RENZO DAINARD, JORDEN MILLER AND DANAE GOUGH**

**Mr. Jim Hillyer (Lethbridge, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, it is with great sadness that I rise today to offer my sincere condolences to the friends and families of four southern Alberta teenagers who lost their lives in a car accident on Saturday night.

Clay Card was on my son's hockey team, and after the game on Saturday night, he and his friend Renzo Dainard went out with two young women, Jorden Miller and Danae Gough. Tragically, they never came home. It is a testament to their character to know that alcohol was not a factor in this accident.

The four friends all came from Magrath, a small town of about 2,300 people where everyone knows everybody. While the entire community mourns and struggles to come to grips with this tragic loss, it is comforting to know that the community will be there to support and comfort the families who lost their sons and daughters.

I call upon the members of the House to join with me in expressing our deep regrets and to offer sincere condolences to the town of Magrath and especially the parents and siblings of Clay Card, Renzo Dainard, Jorden Miller and Danae Gough.

May God grant their families peace and comfort at this difficult time.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

**HOMELESSNESS AWARENESS NIGHT**

**Mr. Pierre Dionne Labelle (Rivière-du-Nord, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, on October 21, in more than 20 cities across Quebec, organizations that help the homeless will be holding activities as part of the 22nd Nuit des sans-abri.

The public is invited to spend a night filled with warmth and emotion under the stars, in the company of street people. Every night, people live, sleep and die on Canadian streets. The Nuit des sans-abri is a special opportunity to break through indifference and diminish the stigma of homelessness by showing our support for the homeless.

The Conservative government brags that our economy is the best in the G8. Unfortunately, persistent poverty is on the rise in this

*Statements by Members*

country and the number of homeless people and people using food banks is growing.

I invite the Conservative government members to come down from their ivory tower and join the homeless on the street on October 21. Perhaps some contact with reality will make them less arrogant and more open to the needs of the less fortunate.

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[English]

**FAUJA SINGH**

**Mr. Parm Gill (Brampton—Springdale, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize an incredible athlete of Sikh origin, Fauja Singh. Fauja Singh broke nine—yes, nine—world age group records this past week in Toronto. He broke the 100 metre, 200 metre, 400 metre, 800 metre, 1,500 metre, 3,000 metre and 5,000 metre world age group records.

As if these records were not enough, Fauja Singh went on to become the oldest person to ever complete a marathon. At over 100 years of age, Fauja Singh ran the Toronto waterfront marathon, 42 kilometres, in 8 hours, 11 minutes and 6 seconds. Aside from his remarkable physical abilities, Mr. Singh selflessly gives back to local communities through charities such as Guru Gobind Singh Children's Foundation, which has a mission to help children meet basic needs.

On behalf of all Canadians, especially those from my riding of Brampton—Springdale, I want to congratulate Fauja Singh on his remarkable achievements.

\* \* \*

**DR. RICHARD TAOR**

**Ms. Judy Foote (Random—Burin—St. George's, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, today I rise to honour the distinguished 44-year career service of Dr. Richard Taor. For 34 of those years, Dr. Taor served the people of Channel-Port aux Basques and surrounding communities in my riding of Random—Burin—St. George's. He cared for his patients with immense compassion and devotion.

As a rural doctor in Newfoundland and Labrador, he overcame challenges to ensure that those in his care received the treatment they needed. His tireless service and staunch work ethic meant his patients received the best medical care possible. Dr. Taor is known for never rushing his patients and always taking time to listen.

Dr. Taor came to Channel-Port aux Basques in 1977 from England. He was welcomed with open arms to an area that he admits he knew almost nothing about. Although his services were pursued by larger communities, he remained loyal to the people who needed his help most. He will be missed as a doctor in the area, but will remain a friend and neighbour.

I ask all members to join me in thanking Dr. Richard Taor for his years of service and in congratulating him on a well-deserved retirement.

*Oral Questions*

● (1415)

**RILEY SENFT**

**Mr. John Weston (West Vancouver—Sunshine Coast—Sea to Sky Country, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, there is nothing more powerful than a Canadian family dedicated to an important cause, such as fighting cancer.

Thirty years ago we were inspired by Terry Fox. In the House we saw first-hand the struggle of Jack Layton, supported by family members like the member for Trinity—Spadina. More recently Canadians celebrated with Riley Senft, a 32-year-old whose West Vancouver family together confronted the challenge of prostate cancer. Riley's grandfather died of prostate cancer in the fall of 2010, and his father Rod, a leading Canadian businessman, is undergoing second-time treatment for this disease.

Bruised but unbowed by cancer in the family, Riley ran over 6,600 kilometres from coast to coast, speaking in communities as he went. Buoyed by his father, his mother Jeannie and his siblings Derek and Lauren, Riley has raised over \$500,000 in the battle against prostate cancer. Over 1,000 people greeted Riley in West Vancouver this month to celebrate the completion of his astonishing run.

May we now rise as well to acknowledge this outstanding Canadian.

\* \* \*

**ALEXANDRA DODGER**

**Mr. Dan Harris (Scarborough Southwest, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, today I rise with a heavy heart to remember the life of a friend whose journey was tragically cut short this past Saturday at the age of 27. Alexandra Dodger was killed after being struck by a car near her home in Ottawa.

Alex was an extraordinary woman who was passionate about life and was determined to improve the lives of those around her. She cared deeply about giving a voice to the voiceless. Alex had just graduated from law school at McGill earlier this year and started a promising career with Amnesty International. Alex dedicated so much of her time to many causes, one of which was the Ontario New Democratic Youth, where I had the pleasure of working with her and where we became friends. There is no doubt in my mind that Alex was destined to do great things and was going to bring forth positive change.

I will cherish our time spent together and miss all the times that we will never have. On behalf of myself, Her Majesty's Loyal Opposition and all our staff, many of whom knew Alex well, I would like to extend our deep and sincere condolences to Alex's family, friends and colleagues, but especially to her mother and grandmother, who must now endure what no parent or grandparent should have to.

\* \* \*

*[Translation]***INTERNATIONAL TRADE**

**Mr. Jacques Gourde (Lotbinière—Chutes-de-la-Chaudière, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, negotiations towards a comprehensive economic and trade agreement between Canada and the European Union are

the most open, collaborative and transparent negotiations this country has ever seen. Two weeks ago, the Minister of International Trade even appeared before the committee, at his own request, to give an update on the negotiations.

Today's demonstrations once again reveal the sad reality: these special interest groups are simply opposed to free trade. The benefits of a Canada-European Union free trade agreement are considerable: a 20% increase in bilateral trade and a \$12 billion annual boost to Canada's economy, not to mention the 80,000 new jobs that would be created in Canada.

By supporting these special interest groups, the NDP is going against the interests of workers and doing precisely what it has unfortunately always done in the past: opposing free trade. As history has shown, protectionist measures only impede growth and kill jobs.

**ORAL QUESTIONS***[English]***AIR CANADA**

**Mrs. Nycole Turmel (Hull—Aylmer, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, while the Minister of Labour gets upgrades from Air Canada managers to fly first class, she sides once again with management, picking winners and losers in the labour dispute.

The Conservatives claim that they believe in the free market, but they are happy to take away the rights of workers to market their value freely.

Could the government explain why it is choosing sides and interfering in the bargaining process?

● (1420)

**Hon. Lisa Raitt (Minister of Labour, CPC):** First of all, Mr. Speaker, I will address the fact that the preface of the hon. leader of the opposition's words was incorrect and that the accusation is false. She should know better and so should the NDP. I expect an apology on the matter.

With respect to the Air Canada dispute, the government has reviewed all of the options that were available to it. Because the two parties have failed at the table and because the economy is still fragile, we have referred the matter to the Canada Industrial Relations Board for its considered opinion.

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*[Translation]***THE ECONOMY**

**Mrs. Nycole Turmel (Leader of the Opposition, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, that kind of answer is making people mad. The Occupy Wall Street movement is spreading throughout the world and to Canada because people are tired of seeing their leaders give billions of dollars in tax cuts to big business. Even the Governor of the Bank of Canada says that these frustrations are legitimate.

Is the message getting through to the Prime Minister?



[English]

**Hon. Ted Menzies (Minister of State (Finance), CPC):** Mr. Speaker, it is fortunate that all Canadians have the right to peacefully express their views.

Canada does not, by the way, have the degree of economic inequality that we are seeing in other countries that have perhaps started this movement. We have a very progressive tax system that favours the vulnerable in this country. We have a social system that supports the unemployed. We have universal health care.

There is a great deal of difference in what we put in front of Canadians and offer to Canadians that they should be thankful for.

**Mrs. Nicole Turmel (Hull—Aylmer, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, inequality is growing in Canada. The middle class is paying more while the top 1% is earning more. People are fed up. They are occupying Wall Street, they are occupying Bay Street, they are occupying Ottawa, yet the Minister of Finance is dismissing them. “All is good, all is well; move along”, he says.

Why will the Prime Minister not listen to them and cancel his corporate tax cuts?

**Hon. Ted Menzies (Minister of State (Finance), CPC):** Mr. Speaker, as part of our economic action plan we put in place reductions in taxes for all Canadians. We have taken almost one million low-income Canadians completely off the tax roll. We have 650,000 more Canadians working than at the end of the recession. That economic action plan is working for Canadians.

I would remind everyone in the House and all Canadians that the NDP voted against every aspect of that.

[Translation]

**Ms. Peggy Nash (Parkdale—High Park, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, the IMF, an ultra-conservative institution, published a study indicating that in countries with more income equality, periods of economic growth are more stable and last longer. The Conservatives are doing the opposite: they continue to give gifts to the wealthiest, making the middle class fall further behind.

Instead of throwing money at big business, why not invest in our communities? Why not?

[English]

**Hon. Ted Menzies (Minister of State (Finance), CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the only gift that this government has given to Canadians is an opportunity that has provided 650,000 more jobs. That is more jobs than were lost. We have recovered all of the output that was lost.

The hon. member raised the IMF. Let me quote the IMF, other than just her selective quotes. It says that relatively, Canada's healthy economic fundamentals create a sounder fiscal financial position than in many other countries in the world. That is what we should be listening to.

**Ms. Peggy Nash (Parkdale—High Park, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, the Conservatives are just not listening. Canadians are sending a message.

The growing inequality between the top 1% and everyone else has to stop. Jobless rates are critically high, especially for young people and new Canadians. Everyday life gets more expensive, and

### Oral Questions

Conservatives stand by while retirement savings tumble with the stock markets.

When will the Conservatives stop padding the pockets of the top 1% and take real action for the 99%? When will they cancel their multi-billion-dollar corporate tax giveaways and invest that money to reduce inequality? When will they do that?

• (1425)

**Hon. Ted Menzies (Minister of State (Finance), CPC):** Mr. Speaker, indeed, if there is one Canadian still looking for a job, that is too many. That is why we will be voting tonight on our economic action plan part 2. We hope that hon. members on the other side will support it.

There are credits in there for small businesses for new hires to get more people back to work. There is a lot more continuation of what we have been doing that is actually working to help create jobs for Canadians.

**Hon. Bob Rae (Toronto Centre, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, to the same minister, he is talking about tax credits to small business of roughly \$165 million, which sounds terrific, including all of his talk about how the government has never increased any taxes. However, could the minister please explain why his government is persisting on the truly retrograde path of taxing small business an additional \$2 billion and employees \$2 billion at the same time the economy is so fragile?

Why is the government giving people \$165 million and taking \$2 billion out of their pockets? Where is the logic in that?

**Hon. Ted Menzies (Minister of State (Finance), CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I would be happy to answer that. I think most Canadians know that the Liberals, I believe, were the ones who suggested putting in place the 45-day work year. We heard from businesses that it would not be a good idea and so we made sure that did not happen.

However, we needed to ensure that the EI fund became actuarially sound. We are going to do that. We are not going to do what the previous Liberal government did which was to borrow that money and not give it back.

[Translation]

**Hon. Bob Rae (Toronto Centre, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the problem remains. There is noise and wind coming from the other side, but that is all right. The government cannot deny that it is problematic to impose a new \$2 billion tax when the economy is extremely fragile.

How can the minister explain this complete contradiction in the Conservative Party's policy?

[English]

**Hon. Ted Menzies (Minister of State (Finance), CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the contradiction comes from the questioner because he was part of a party that wanted to create a 45-day work year. That would not have been good for employees. That would not have been good for companies in this country.

*Oral Questions*

The last thing we want to do is raise costs to businesses. They are employers and that is why we continue to reduce their costs. That is what will get more people back to work and that is the main focus of this government: jobs and improving the economy.

**Hon. Bob Rae (Toronto Centre, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the minister can fantasize however much he wants after being prompted by some of his colleagues to come up with these fantastic theories.

I just want him to focus for a moment. I know he can do it—

**Some hon. members:** Oh, oh!

**The Speaker:** Order, please. The member has the right to pose the question.

The hon. member for Toronto Centre.

**Hon. Bob Rae:** Mr. Speaker, the question is very simple. Why would you persist in a payroll tax, which everyone in the country knows is a killer of jobs? Why would you persist with a payroll tax just at the moment when unemployment is a big issue?

**The Speaker:** I would remind the hon. member to address his questions to the chair and not directly at his colleagues.

The hon. minister of state.

**Hon. Ted Menzies (Minister of State (Finance), CPC):** Mr. Speaker, and so is Christmas coming too I understand.

I do not like to point out what a former government did, but it is pretty hypocritical to ask a question like that when the Liberals raided the EI fund. There is no polite way to put it, \$57 billion was missing. That is money from employees and employers. We would not have had to make any changes to EI if it had not been for their actions.

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**INTERNATIONAL TRADE**

**Mr. Robert Chisholm (Dartmouth—Cole Harbour, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, the government has a track record as a bad negotiator on softwood lumber, on buy America, and I am afraid it is at it again. With respect to the Canada-EU trade negotiation, European officials are saying that Canada would come out a loser. Canadian trade experts are saying that there is not enough in the deal to make it worthwhile.

Why do the Conservatives continue to negotiate bad trade deals that put Canadian jobs at risk?

• (1430)

**Mr. Gerald Keddy (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of International Trade, for the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency and for the Atlantic Gateway, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, our trade negotiation with the European Union is Canada's most important trade initiative since the signing of the historic North American free trade agreement. A trade agreement with the EU will increase Canada's economy by \$12 billion and increase two-way trade by 20%. This is an ambitious free trade agreement. It will create jobs and economic growth for Canadians in all regions of the country.

**Mr. Robert Chisholm (Dartmouth—Cole Harbour, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, unfortunately, that is a wish list. We have to see the government start to stand up for ordinary Canadians. By caving to

European pharmaceutical companies, the Conservatives are driving up health care costs by up to \$2.8 billion. Many seniors in Dartmouth—Cole Harbour, and across the country, are already having trouble making ends meet. This trade deal would mean that seniors will have an even harder time paying for the drugs that they need.

My question is, why is this out of touch government negotiating deals that put the health care of Canadians at risk?

**Mr. Gerald Keddy (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of International Trade, for the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency and for the Atlantic Gateway, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I said earlier that the benefits to Canadians are clear. A trade agreement with the European Union is expected to boost Canada's economy by \$12 billion and increase two-way trade by 20%. I would remind the member opposite that this government always protects and advances Canada's interests during international negotiations and will only enter into an agreement that is in the best interests of Canadians.

[Translation]

**Mr. Mathieu Ravnat (Pontiac, NDP):** Unbelievable, Mr. Speaker. This government is still helping its buddies and is forgetting Canadians. It is completely irresponsible.

The government is getting ready to sign a trade agreement with the European Union that could have serious consequences for Canadians. According to an expert study, if Canada waives patent protection for generic drugs, as the European Union wants, there could be nearly \$3 billion in added costs for our health care system.

Why is this government determined to negotiate an agreement that jeopardizes the health of Canadians?

[English]

**Mr. Gerald Keddy (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of International Trade, for the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency and for the Atlantic Gateway, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the hon. member has his facts wrong. Like all of Canada's trade agreements, a free trade agreement with the European Union would exclude public services such as public health, public education, and social services. Canada's trade obligations do not require us to privatize any part of our health care system. The claims to this are simply hogwash.



[Translation]

**Mr. Mathieu Ravignat (Pontiac, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, let us talk about the facts. Canadians are worried that the Conservatives are giving their friends at the major pharmaceutical companies exclusive rights to data. Those are the facts. Manufacturers of generic drugs face long delays and added costs to get their products on the market. Is that not a double standard?

How will families, who are already struggling to pay for medications, be able to afford them under such conditions?

[English]

**Mr. Gerald Keddy (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of International Trade, for the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency and for the Atlantic Gateway, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I would remind the member opposite that the government always protects and advances Canada's interests during international negotiations. We will only enter into an agreement that is in Canada's best interests. The benefits to Canada are clear. As I said earlier, a trade agreement with the European Union is expected to boost Canada's economy by \$12 billion and increase two-way trade by 20%. Our ambitious pro-trade plan will create jobs and economic growth to Canadians in all regions of the country.

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#### PENSIONS

**Ms. Irene Mathysen (London—Fanshawe, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, a new report by TD Bank shows that seniors in Canada are accumulating debt at a rate faster than other Canadians. With the rising cost of food, home heating, and day to day expenses, seniors are struggling to make ends meet. Seniors built this country and deserve to retire with dignity. We need pension reform, long-term care, and affordable home care.

When will the government finally take action and ensure a secure retirement for all seniors?

• (1435)

**Hon. Alice Wong (Minister of State (Seniors), CPC):** Mr. Speaker, Canada's seniors have worked hard to build a better country and our government believes they deserve a secure and dignified retirement. That is why we are providing the largest GIS increase in a quarter century to the lowest income seniors who need it the most. Also, since 2006, the government has provided over \$2.3 billion in annual tax relief for seniors and pensioners, removed 380,000 seniors from the tax rolls completely, and introduced pension income splitting.

We have also made significant advances in affordable housing—

**The Speaker:** Order, please. I will have to stop the minister there.

The hon. member for Pierrefonds—Dollard.

[Translation]

**Ms. Lysane Blanchette-Lamothe (Pierrefonds—Dollard, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, clearly that is not enough. Canadians over the age of 65 are piling up debt three times faster than the average rate. Unfortunately, their savings are dwindling. While the stock market is free-falling and private pension plans are disappearing like snow on a summer's day, our seniors are on the ropes.

#### Oral Questions

When will this government take concrete measures to ensure that our seniors can live in dignity?

[English]

**Hon. Ted Menzies (Minister of State (Finance), CPC):** Mr. Speaker, that is a relevant question. I am glad that the NDP has recognized that there is more we can do to help seniors save for their retirement. That is why we have been working with our partners, the provinces, in developing a new form of a pooled registered pension plan that would provide an opportunity for almost 60% of Canadians, who now do not have a workplace pension plan, to help them save for their retirement.

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#### POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION

**Ms. Rathika Sitsabaiesan (Scarborough—Rouge River, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, the federal government's own report shows that it will breach the legal limit for student loans by 2013. On average, Canadians are graduating with a debt of over \$25,000 and tuition fees are still rising at four times the rate of inflation.

If the government is as serious as it says it is about securing Canada's economic future, why will it not commit to a plan to reduce tuition fees and take real action to reduce the debt which is burdening students and their families?

**Hon. Diane Finley (Minister of Human Resources and Skills Development, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, we are concerned about ensuring students have access to post-secondary education whether it is colleges or universities. That is why we introduced the apprentice incentive grant and the completion grant. That is why we introduced the Canada student grants program that is helping 190,000 more students than the previous Liberal plan. That is also why we have made scholarships and bursaries tax free, and made improvements in the registered education savings plan.

Sadly, the NDP has voted against every single one of those efforts to help students.

[Translation]

**Mr. Matthew Dubé (Chambly—Borduas, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, obviously, the minister needs to do her homework. The reality is that tuition fees have never been higher, and by 2013, student debt will be more than \$15 billion. The government is pushing an entire generation to the brink of bankruptcy.

Will the government finally take measures to reduce the burden of student debt by developing an education transfer for the provinces?

**Hon. Diane Finley (Minister of Human Resources and Skills Development, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, that is exactly what we are doing right now to help them. We have given universities and colleges billions of dollars for infrastructure so that students have a place to study and acquire the skills they will need in the labour market.

### Oral Questions

We have made many efforts to help students through bursaries and tax measures. Unfortunately, the NDP has voted against every single one of these initiatives.

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### AIR CANADA

**Mr. Yvon Godin (Acadie—Bathurst, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, by threatening Air Canada's flight attendants with back-to-work legislation, the government interfered in the legitimate bargaining process between employees and employer. It made the situation even worse by using an unfair practice. Instead of promoting negotiations in good faith, the Minister of Labour intervened personally. That is a dangerous precedent.

Is making threats this Conservative government's new negotiation technique?

[English]

**Hon. Lisa Raitt (Minister of Labour, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, as I have indicated, we are very disappointed that the two parties have not been able to attain their own collective agreement. Indeed, two times the parties at the table reached a tentative agreement and twice their membership rejected it in ratification.

I approached the member opposite on the concerns I had leading up to the second ratification vote and I asked that he work with me on this, and work with the union because it is a serious matter which can be solved if the two parties come together and come to their own collective agreement.

• (1440)

**Mr. Rodger Cuzner (Cape Breton—Canso, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, last week a reprehensible crime took place here in Ottawa, but we will not have to bring in CSI Ottawa to find the guilty party. Organized labour in this country was bludgeoned by the Conservative government and the Minister of Labour's fingerprints are all over the weapon.

However, the real crime here is that, for the past six days, rather than bringing the groups together, she has driven them apart. What really needs an upgrade here is her mediation skills. What is she doing to try to bring these groups back together again?

**Hon. Lisa Raitt (Minister of Labour, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, since June 3 of this year, our government has been trying to give every facilitation available to the two parties.

If the member for Cape Breton—Canso would be quiet. Although he is way the heck down at the other end of the House, I can hear him interrupting me and I know that the good people of Cape Breton would not appreciate that either.

That being said, we are doing everything we possibly can to get the two parties together. They have reached an impasse and, as such, we will protect the economy and act in the best interests of Canadians.

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### FISHERIES AND OCEANS

**Hon. Lawrence MacAulay (Cardigan, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, an internal memo to DFO employees has laid out the government's plans to wind down large ocean management projects, slash funding

for science, services, aquaculture and other crucial departmental responsibilities. It seems that fishing communities are caught in the middle of the Conservative attack on facts and evidence.

Will the government stop its plan to destroy DFO and destroy Canada's fisheries and coastal communities?

**Hon. Keith Ashfield (Minister of Fisheries and Oceans and Minister for the Atlantic Gateway, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, of course nothing could be further from the truth. Science is an important part of fisheries management and we honour that principle and will continue in the future gaining information from science to better manage our fisheries.

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### VETERANS AFFAIRS

**Mr. Sean Casey (Charlottetown, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the minister is about to defend the gutting of \$200 million from Veterans Affairs. I can see that he has his PMO script all ready to go. Why did Veterans Affairs spend \$3 million on backdrops—

**Some hon. members:** Oh, oh!

**The Speaker:** Order, please. The hon. member for Charlottetown.

**Mr. Sean Casey:** Why did Veterans Affairs spend almost \$3 million on photo ops while gutting the department by \$200 million? Why are there millions for PR stunts but nothing but cutbacks for the people who really matter, our veterans?

**Hon. Steven Blaney (Minister of Veterans Affairs, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, contrary to the member, this government and this side of the House are investing in veterans. In the last six years we have invested \$3 billion more than the current budget. This is \$500 million more for our veterans and their families. We will stay the course because the veterans are a priority for this government.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

### THE ENVIRONMENT

**Ms. Megan Leslie (Halifax, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, RCEN is a network of 640 environmental organizations in Canada. For the past 30 years, the network has been facilitating and supporting the work of Environment Canada. Last May, Environment Canada confirmed that funding for the network's operations would be maintained. Confirmation of the funds was to follow. After months of waiting, the network learned on Friday that its funding would be cut.

Why did the minister withdraw RCEN's funding?



[English]

**Ms. Michelle Rempel (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of the Environment, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the government has decided not to enter into a contribution agreement with the Canadian Environmental Network this year. Responsible spending and sound management of tax dollars are important at all times. The department is moving toward a more direct use of web-based consultation and we already have a number of web pages dedicated to public participation.

• (1445)

**Ms. Megan Leslie (Halifax, NDP):** What the Conservatives are doing, Mr. Speaker, is stifling dissent. They are muzzling or firing scientists and now they are eviscerating the communications network of environmental groups across Canada.

The minister claims that it is a rigorous process to manage spending, but while he was cutting half a million dollars from Canadian environmental groups, the government announced \$28 million to celebrate the War of 1812.

Well, this just in, the real war is the war the government is waging on the environment. When will the minister do the right thing and restore this funding?

**Ms. Michelle Rempel (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of the Environment, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, since 2006, our government has announced several important climate change and environmental protection initiatives. In the past year, we have announced several transportation regulations that are involved with our U.S. counterparts. I am happy to compare our record any day against the previous government which did nothing but announce intentions.

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#### FISHERIES AND OCEANS

**Mr. Fin Donnelly (New Westminster—Coquitlam, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, the fisheries minister is lost at sea. He has yet to say where the \$57 million in cuts will come from. Now we learn that the government is cutting the Fisheries Resource Conservation Council on both coasts. These groups work closely with fishing communities providing much needed advice to the minister.

Why is the government gutting this department? Why is it turning its back on Canadian fishing families and our coastal communities?

**Hon. Keith Ashfield (Minister of Fisheries and Oceans and Minister for the Atlantic Gateway, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, we must ensure that the government spends money efficiently, effectively and in achieving the expected results for all Canadians.

While the FRCC has historically served an important role, activities have been replaced by other approaches, such as the industry is participating in stock assessments and the development of integrated fisheries management plans, and through various advisory committees.

**Mr. Ryan Cleary (St. John's South—Mount Pearl, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, the resource conservation councils are not the only things being cut by DFO. News has broken in recent days that further cuts to the science branch of Fisheries and Oceans are coming. The branch has already been gutted.

#### Oral Questions

Do the Conservatives really expect to manage our future fishery without any science based planning and with no input from the fishermen who work our seas?

John Crosbie once asked, "Who hears the fishes when they cry?". Well, who hears our fishermen when they speak?

**Hon. Keith Ashfield (Minister of Fisheries and Oceans and Minister for the Atlantic Gateway, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, our government has made tremendous investments in science since 2006, including \$30 million to upgrade 16 laboratories and sites across the country, and \$36 million to construct 3 new science vessels.

The government has focused on marine science. We have invested \$14 million to complete mapping and data collecting in the Atlantic and Arctic Oceans for Canada's submission to the United Nations convention.

We have done a lot for science—

**The Speaker:** The hon. member for Brant.

\* \* \*

#### SMALL BUSINESS

**Mr. Phil McColeman (Brant, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, this week is small business week, a great opportunity and time to highlight the fact that our small business owners are the economic motors and backbone of our economy. Small businesses create jobs and economic growth right across this country.

Would the Minister of State for Small Business and Tourism tell the House what our government is doing to help them continue to invest, innovate and grow?

**Hon. Maxime Bernier (Minister of State (Small Business and Tourism), CPC):** Mr. Speaker, Canada is the best country in the world in which to do business. Do members know why? It is because we lowered taxes for all businesses. We will continue to do that because we know that when they have money in their pockets they can create jobs and wealth in this country.

As the chair of the red tape reduction commission, I am pleased to say that we will work on ensuring that we have less red tape for Canadian entrepreneurs.

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#### ETHICS

**Mr. Charlie Angus (Timmins—James Bay, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, it is now 130 days since the Muskoka minister took a dive on accountability of the G8 slush fund.

We now know that Huntsville was green-lighted to blow \$30 million in federal money without tenders. We now know that the Muskoka minister got a job for his buddy. We now know that his campaign manager turned lobbyist hit up the federal government for millions in grants.

The Auditor General said that the rules were broken and that it was Parliament's job to investigate.

*Oral Questions*

Will the government commit to a full parliamentary investigation to find out how \$50 million were diverted into a personal slush fund for the rogue Muskoka minister?

• (1450)

**Hon. John Baird (Minister of Foreign Affairs, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, it will not come as any surprise to that member or to the House that I categorically reject the premise of the member's question.

What we do know is that I approved 32 public infrastructure projects to support municipal, provincial and airport authority infrastructure in that region.

As the Auditor General has reported, every dollar was accounted for in terms of the municipalities that incurred these infrastructure expenses. The Auditor General has come forward and made reports on how we can be even more accountable and more transparent to Parliament. We have completely accepted her good recommendations.

[Translation]

**Mr. Alexandre Boulerice (Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, the President of the Treasury Board used a \$50 million slush fund to award untendered contracts, give jobs to his friends and build an Olympic-sized arena, gazebos, a media centre that was never used and a campus that students do not go to. Last week, he described himself as the government's chief operating officer. First, that is very telling. Second, now we know why the President of the Treasury Board is not rising: his title has changed.

Now, can the government's chief operating officer stand up and explain himself?

[English]

**Hon. John Baird (Minister of Foreign Affairs, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, all 32 of these projects had an individual contribution agreement with the municipalities or independent orders of government for which this government has always shown considerable respect. Each contribution agreement requires and sets out expectations and these expectations are expected to be followed.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

**NATIONAL DEFENCE**

**Mr. Alexandre Boulerice (Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, we suspect that the government's chief operating officer likely followed the lead of the Associate Minister of National Defence. His department just spent—or wasted—\$375,000 setting up new offices for assistant deputy ministers. That is the price of a new house for a Canadian family.

While so many people are having trouble making ends meet, how can the minister explain excesses such as planned helicopter rides, the use of the Challenger and renovations that are costing taxpayers an arm and a leg?

[English]

**Hon. Julian Fantino (Associate Minister of National Defence, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, it is unacceptable that any spending not be monitored, well-coordinated and justified. In this particular case, the work that has been done was to relocate a number of new employees

within the ministry. That coordination needed to be done to facilitate new members to the Department of National Defence, a new work area and new facilities.

**Mr. Matthew Kellway (Beaches—East York, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, let us look at the government's recent track record on defence procurement.

Costs for Chinook helicopters have gone up by 70%, wasting billions. Untendered contracts for the F-35, costing Canadians untold billions, carry no guarantee of Canadian jobs. Instead of dealing with these issues, the defence department decided to blow \$375,000 on office renovations.

Does the Associate Minister of National Defence really think that these problems will be solved by sprucing up the department's offices?

**Hon. Julian Fantino (Associate Minister of National Defence, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, we are concerned about all spending of tax dollars, the expenditure of this particular office renovation no less. We treat every dollar entrusted to us by taxpayers with the utmost care and respect.

The Department of National Defence recently refitted the offices of the deputy minister and associate deputy minister and their staff to include them in a single office work area.

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**CANADIAN WHEAT BOARD**

**Mr. Frank Valeriote (Guelph, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the government is railroading wheat and barley farmers who support maintaining their own single desk marketing and sales arm under the Canadian Wheat Board.

The government is tying farmers to the track by removing their clout and ability to stand up to grain companies and unfair rail prices and transportation costs. It is removing their ability to be price setters and leaving them forced to accept the lowest price possible.

Why will the so-called law and order government, intent on breaking the law, not follow the law set out in the Wheat Board Act and hold its own plebiscite before it introduces legislation to kill the single desk system?

**Mr. David Anderson (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Natural Resources and for the Canadian Wheat Board, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, what an exciting day for western Canadian farmers to finally hear that legislation will be presented that will give them freedom. I will read what one of the farmers had to say about that. He said, "I have never been more optimistic than I am now to be a grain farmer in western Canada. These are exciting times. I am looking forward to the future and this legislation is well timed. We have been waiting a long time for it, so thank you".

That is from a western Canadian farmer.



• (1455)

[Translation]

**Mr. Marc Garneau (Westmount—Ville-Marie, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the government wants to do away with the Canadian Wheat Board. Will its next victim be supply management? We all know that the government's chief negotiator for the free trade agreement with Europe said in committee that everything is on the table during the negotiations.

How can we be assured that this government will not yield to pressure from the Europeans on the issue of supply management?

[English]

**Mr. Gerald Keddy (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of International Trade, for the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency and for the Atlantic Gateway, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, when the minister appeared before the trade committee, he reassured the committee once again that supply management was protected by this government and would continue to be protected by this government.

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[Translation]

#### RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT

**Ms. Hélène LeBlanc (LaSalle—Émard, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, the expert panel's report on research and development confirms that the government's innovation strategy is a failure. This government's lack of long-term vision is costing us jobs and reducing our ability to compete internationally. This government must do more to be a leader in innovation because Canada is only marking time.

When will this government finally help the businesses and researchers that innovate and move Canada forward?

[English]

**Hon. Gary Goodyear (Minister of State (Science and Technology) (Federal Economic Development Agency for Southern Ontario), CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for pointing out that we did receive a panel report today. I want to thank the panel for its hard work and assure the House that I will be considering all the recommendations in that report.

We do want to celebrate with our businesses this week. We want our businesses to do research, develop new products and new markets. What that would mean for Canadians is jobs, better jobs, higher paying jobs and a higher standard of living, and that is what we want.

**Mr. Dan Harris (Scarborough Southwest, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, it is nice to know that the minister knows there is a report, but it would help for him to read it because it would show him that the government's strategy has failed. As countries around the world move forward with new innovations, Canada keeps falling behind.

When will the government stop subsidizing corporate research and start promoting direct investment in R and D like leading countries do? When will it start listening to New Democrats and begin moving Canada forward by adequately funding basic scientific research so our scientists can get results for Canadians?

**Hon. Gary Goodyear (Minister of State (Science and Technology) (Federal Economic Development Agency for Southern Ontario), CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I assure the member that if he

#### Oral Questions

looks at the record of this government, he will see broad and extensive research funding for basic research all the way through to applied research. Indeed, this government has some of the most generous programs to encourage businesses to do their own research. We are expecting businesses to do a little more. We want to ensure they have the tools.

I will read the report and get back to the House very shortly.

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#### NATIONAL PARKS

**Mr. Greg Kerr (West Nova, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, in the past six years, our government has taken action that will result in an increase of Parks Canada's network of national parks and national marine conservation areas by 50%. This morning the Minister of the Environment was in Nova Scotia to expand on this commitment to create new protected areas.

Could the parliamentary secretary update Canadians on what took place in Halifax today?

**Ms. Michelle Rempel (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of the Environment, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, this morning in Halifax, the Minister of the Environment, along with the Minister of National Defence, signed an agreement to make Sable Island a national park reserve.

Today's memorable agreement will ensure that this iconic and valued Canadian landscape, famed for its wild horses, shipwrecks and one of the largest dune systems in eastern Canada, will be protected as a national park reserve for the benefit of Canadians now and in the future. This is yet another example of how our government is taking concrete action to protect our country's natural heritage.

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#### FISHERIES AND OCEANS

**Ms. Judy Foote (Random—Burin—St. George's, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans cannot continue to speak out of both sides of his mouth and expect to retain his credibility. The government cannot on one hand shut down the Fisheries Resource Conservation Council and at the same time say it supports science.

First it puts the lives of fishers at risk by recklessly closing the Maritime Rescue Sub-Centre in St. John's and now it wants to take the fishers out of the industry altogether by cutting the guts out of the department.

When will the government live up to its responsibility and support the fishing industry instead of trying to destroy it?

*Oral Questions*

● (1500)

**Hon. Keith Ashfield (Minister of Fisheries and Oceans and Minister for the Atlantic Gateway, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, as I said previously, the FRCC has historically served an important role, but activities have been replaced by other approaches. Fisheries and Oceans Canada has built into its operations other ways to gather input from fish harvesters, including industry participation, stock assessments and development of integrated fisheries management plan and through advisory committees.

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**CANADIAN WHEAT BOARD**

**Ms. Niki Ashton (Churchill, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, the Conservatives are at it again. The agriculture minister has talked about blowing the candles out on the Wheat Board. The Prime Minister has talked about a train barrelling down on the Wheat Board. We have not seen this kind of arrogance since the Mulroney Tories whose legacy was to be left with two seats, none of them in western Canada.

When will the Prime Minister cut the arrogance, stop taking western Canadians for granted and save the Canadian Wheat Board?

**Mr. David Anderson (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Natural Resources and for the Canadian Wheat Board, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, our government is proud to represent western Canadian farmers. We remain committed to providing them with the same opportunities and the same freedoms that other farmers have across the country. We know full well that this is going to increase investment. We have already heard that. We heard an announcement last week in Regina that someone was going to spend \$50 million on a pasta plant. It will be the first pasta plant in western Canada in decades. However, people need a free market in order to do that. We know that it will encourage innovation. We know that it is going to create value-added jobs and it is going to create a stronger economy in western Canada.

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**INTERNATIONAL TRADE**

**Mr. Ron Cannan (Kelowna—Lake Country, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, today kicks off the ninth round of negotiations toward an ambitious Canada-EU free trade agreement. We are trying to work with all parties in the House to create jobs and grow our economy. However, the NDP support for special interest groups that oppose free and open trade shows that the NDP does not represent ordinary Canadians who stand to benefit immensely from a free trade agreement with the European Union.

I ask the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of International Trade to explain how this agreement would benefit Canadian workers and their families.

**Mr. Gerald Keddy (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of International Trade, for the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency and for the Atlantic Gateway, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the member for Kelowna—Lake Country for his support for our job-creating, pro trade plan.

Today's events prove once again that the NDP and its special interest groups are ideologically opposed to free trade and will continue to invent any reason to oppose free and open trade.

We welcome the ninth round of negotiations as the benefits for Canadian workers and businesses through a free trade agreement with the EU are expected to be enormous: a 20% boost in bilateral trade, a \$12 billion annual boost to Canada's economy and almost 80,000 new jobs created.

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**THE ENVIRONMENT**

**Mr. Peter Stoffer (Sackville—Eastern Shore, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, now we know the environment minister is in Halifax, could the government tell us if he is having discussions with the environment minister of Nova Scotia regarding the 233 metre vessel which is stuck off Scatarie Island? It will cost anywhere from \$20 million to \$24 million and the federal government has told the province that it will not be responsible for or even assist in the removal of that vessel.

Could the environment minister or the parliamentary secretary please tell the House what the government will do to assist the province of Nova Scotia in removing the MV *Miner* from Scatarie Island?

**Hon. Denis Lebel (Minister of Transport, Infrastructure and Communities and Minister of the Economic Development Agency of Canada for the Regions of Quebec, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, Transport Canada's role is to ensure that Canada's waterways provide safe navigation and are free of ship-source pollution. We know that is a provincial jurisdiction, but we will continue to work with the province to determine that there is no polluting of the marine environment and that it is not a hazard to navigation for the moment.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

**GOVERNMENT APPOINTMENTS**

**Mr. Jean-François Fortin (Haute-Gaspésie—La Mitis—Matane—Matapédia, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, today the Prime Minister announced the appointment of two new justices to the Supreme Court. And what do we know about them? One of the two judges does not understand French even though he will have to rule on disputes involving laws written in French.

Can the government confirm that the selection committee set up in August has unanimously chosen a judge who does not understand French and that the government approves this choice?

**Hon. Rob Nicholson (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his question.

[English]

The Supreme Court of Canada is the pinnacle of our judicial system and we will continue to make appointments to that body on the basis of legal excellence and merit.



## PRESENCE IN GALLERY

**The Speaker:** I would like to draw to the attention of hon. members the presence in the gallery of a group of boys and girls, the Children's Miracle Network 2011 Champions from across the country.

These youngsters have overcome life-threatening illnesses or injuries and have been chosen to represent the millions of children who are treated annually by the Children's Miracle Network hospitals and foundations across North America.

**Some hon. members:** Hear, hear!

\* \* \*

• (1505)

## POINTS OF ORDER

## ORAL QUESTIONS

**Mr. Rodger Cuzner (Cape Breton—Canso, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. During the course of question period, while I sat here quietly waiting for a response to a question that I posed for the Minister of Labour, which obviously I did not get an answer, she made reference to being heckled from this corner of the chamber and in particular from this member. I can assure you, and you have access to the transcript in the *Hansard*, that there was no such noise that came out of this corner or this member. I think the minister would want to stand and correct that.

On another aspect, she did reference the fact that the constituents of Cape Breton expected a great deal from their members. I would agree with her and that is why there are two Liberals back in the chamber.

**The Speaker:** That is not a point of order.

**Mr. Tom Lukiwski (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, on a related point of order, I am glad my colleague for Cape Breton—Canso stood and made reference to his question. In his question to the Minister of Labour earlier today, the preamble seemed to suggest that the minister was guilty of criminal conduct.

I know the member for Cape Breton—Canso and I know him to be a person of good character. I am sure he would want to do the right thing, the parliamentary thing, and stand up, withdraw his remarks unreservedly and apologize to the minister. Failing that, I would ask that you, Mr. Speaker, to review the comments made earlier in his preamble, judge accordingly and rule accordingly.

**Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP):** Mr. Speaker, I agree with you. This is not a proper point of order. However, I have something in common with the Minister of Labour and the member for Cape Breton—Canso. We all share Cape Breton roots.

As neither of them are members of my party, and as both of them are people I hold in high regard, I would like the Minister of Labour to know that the hon. member for Cape Breton—Canso, unless this jokester has learned how to project his voice as a ventriloquist, was as quiet as the grave as he awaited the minister's answer.

**The Speaker:** I appreciate in the interventions from the Cape Breton caucus, but I think we will move on.

## Routine Proceedings

## ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

[English]

## BOARD OF INTERNAL ECONOMY

**The Speaker:** I have the honour to inform the House that Mr. Comartin, member of the electoral district of Windsor—Tecumseh, has been appointed a member of the Board of Internal Economy in place of Mr. Mulcair, member for the electoral district of Outremont, for the purposes and under the provisions of section 50 of the Parliament of Canada Act.

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## CANADIAN CENTRE FOR OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY

**Hon. Lisa Raitt (Minister of Labour, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, pursuant to subsection 26(2) of the Canadian Centre for Occupational Health and Safety Act I have the honour to table, in both official languages, the annual report of the Canadian Centre for Occupational Health and Safety for 2010-11.

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[Translation]

## AIR CANADA AND ITS ASSOCIATES ACT

**Hon. Denis Lebel (Minister of Transport, Infrastructure and Communities and Minister of the Economic Development Agency of Canada for the Regions of Quebec, CPC)** moved for leave to introduce Bill C-17, An Act to amend the Air Canada Public Participation Act.

(Motions deemed adopted, bill read the first time and printed)

\* \* \*

• (1510)

[English]

## COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE

## PROCEDURE AND HOUSE AFFAIRS

**Mr. Joe Preston (Elgin—Middlesex—London, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Orders 104 and 114, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the fifth report of the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs regarding the membership of committees of this House. If the House gives its consent, I intend to move concurrence in the fifth report later this day.

\* \* \*

## UKRAINE

**Hon. Peter Van Loan (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, there have been consultations and I believe you will find unanimous consent of the House for the following motion.

I move:

That a take-note debate on the subject of concerns regarding the ongoing erosion of democracy in Ukraine, including most recently the politically motivated and arbitrary prosecution and conviction of former prime minister Yulia Tymoshenko by Ukrainian authorities, take place, pursuant to Standing Order 53.1, on Tuesday, October 18, 2011.

*Routine Proceedings*

**The Speaker:** Does the hon. minister have the unanimous consent of the House to propose this motion?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**The Speaker:** Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

(Motion agreed to)

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**EGYPTIAN COPTIC CHRISTIANS**

**Hon. Jim Karygiannis (Scarborough—Agincourt, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, Coptic Christians in Egypt face persecution and discrimination. As the Arab spring unfolded in Egypt with people from all religious faiths joining together to overthrow the tyranny of Hosni Mubarak, the future looked brighter for Christians in Egypt. Unfortunately, under the new military government in Egypt, religious extremists seem to be able to carry out attacks on Christians and their churches with impunity. In the most recent attack, a Coptic church in upper Egypt was burned by religious extremists. When there was no reaction from the authorities, frustrated Copts gathered in Cairo's Maspero neighbourhood to protest the partial demolition of the church in Aswan province and call for the removal of the province's governor for failing to protect the church.

Army units fired on demonstrators with a resulting death toll of 25, most of whom were Copts, and scores injured. Videos showed an armoured personnel carrier running people down. There could not have been a more callous expression of disregard by the Egyptian armed forces for the lives of Egyptian Christians.

Therefore, I am seeking unanimous consent for the following motion. I move:

That this House condemn the attacks on Egyptian Coptic Christians and their institutions; call on the Egyptian Government to ensure that the perpetrators of the attacks be brought to justice and bear the full weight of the law; and, ask the United Nations Human Rights Commission to investigate the plight of Egyptian Coptic Christians and issue a report on its findings.

**The Speaker:** I will recognize the hon. Minister of Foreign Affairs before I see if there is consent for this.

**Hon. John Baird (Minister of Foreign Affairs, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the member's concern for this. Those of us in the government, joined by the New Democratic Party, are concerned that the resolution the member presented is not strong enough and would like to strengthen it. My colleague's motion should be amended to read as follows:

That this House stand in solidarity with those religious minorities around the world and strongly condemn the vicious attacks on Egyptian Coptic Christians and their institutions; call on the Egyptian Government to ensure that the perpetrators of the attacks be brought to justice and bear the full weight of the law; and, ask the United Nations Human Rights Commission to conduct an open and transparent investigation into the plight of Egyptian Coptic Christians and issue a public report on its findings.

**The Speaker:** Would the member for Scarborough—Agincourt like me to seek the consent of the House for his motion or will he withdraw his request in lieu of what the minister has just proposed?

**Hon. Jim Karygiannis:** Mr. Speaker, I think the minister is amending my motion and the amendment is fully acceptable. I

would like to point out that this motion is seconded by my colleague from York West.

**The Speaker:** I am going to take it that the hon. member for Scarborough—Agincourt is withdrawing his motion.

**An hon. member:** No.

**The Speaker:** Given that there seems to be agreement for this, does the House give its unanimous consent for the motion by the member for Scarborough—Agincourt as amended by the Minister of Foreign Affairs? Is there unanimous consent to proceed in this fashion?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**The Speaker:** Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

(Motion agreed to)

\* \* \*

● (1515)

**COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE**

## PROCEDURE AND HOUSE AFFAIRS

**Mr. Joe Preston (Elgin—Middlesex—London, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, if the House gives its consent, I move that the fifth report of the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs presented to the House earlier today be concurred in.

**The Speaker:** Does the hon. member for Elgin—Middlesex—London have the unanimous consent of the House to propose this motion?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**The Speaker:** The House has heard the terms of the motion. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

(Motion agreed to)

\* \* \*

**PETITIONS**

## ASBESTOS

**Mr. Pat Martin (Winnipeg Centre, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present a petition signed by literally thousands of Canadians from all across Canada. They call upon Parliament to take note that asbestos is the greatest industrial killer the world has ever known. They further point out that Canada continues to be one of the largest producers and exporters of asbestos in the world. The petitioners also want Parliament to take note that more Canadians now die from asbestos than all other industrial causes combined and yet Canada spends millions of dollars subsidizing the asbestos industry and blocking international efforts to curb its use.



The petitioners call upon the Government of Canada to ban asbestos in all its forms and institute a just transition program for asbestos workers and the communities in which they live. They also call upon government to end all subsidies of asbestos, both in Canada and abroad, and finally, to stop blocking international health and safety conventions designed to protect workers from asbestos, such as the Rotterdam convention.

## FISHERIES AND OCEANS

**Mr. Scott Simms (Bonavista—Gander—Grand Falls—Windsor, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, in light of today's question period, this petition is germane to the debate concerning fisheries and oceans.

The petitioners are asking for the dismantling of a large part of the Department of Fisheries and Oceans. More important, the petitioners are calling for an inquiry into how the department goes about its business on the east, west and north coasts and inland waters.

The petitioners request a public inquiry into all aspects of DFO. They request that the current structure be dismantled and to put in place a model that takes into account fisheries science with an emphasis on serving the fishermen who make a living from the industry.

In light of that situation we recently heard that the government is coming forth with a model that does fisheries science management in a three to five year period, which the petitioners believe will be detrimental to science information as presented to the fishing industry in this country.

I hope the House will look upon this petition favourably.

## MEGA QUARRY DEVELOPMENT

**Mr. David Tilson (Dufferin—Caledon, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, yesterday over 20,000 people were in attendance in Melancthon Township in my riding to oppose a mega quarry in Melancthon Township in Dufferin County. I received this petition from many of those people who are concerned that this mega quarry will put at risk the drinking water of over one million Canadians.

The petitioners call upon the Government of Canada to conduct an environmental assessment under the authority of the Canadian Environmental Assessment Act on the proposed Highland Companies' mega quarry development.

## CANADIAN WHEAT BOARD

**Mr. Frank Valeriote (Guelph, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, while the member for Cypress Hills—Grasslands responded to my question by citing one person who favoured the end of the Canadian Wheat Board, I rise to submit a petition signed by countless western Canadian grain and barley farmers who are concerned with the government's ideological plan to kill the Canadian Wheat Board without first holding a plebiscite of the board's membership as it is required to do by section 47.1 of the Canadian Wheat Board Act.

Western Canadian farmers' livelihoods are at risk should they lose the clout of the Canadian Wheat Board to set the best price for their grain, negotiate fair treatment from the railways, and lower transportation costs among the many services it provides.

## Routine Proceedings

The petitioners demand that the Minister of Agriculture honour their wishes as expressed democratically through a plebiscite they held this past summer.

• (1520)

## THE ENVIRONMENT

**Ms. Kirsty Duncan (Etobicoke North, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to present a petition regarding the atmospheric ozone layer, which is critical to life on earth through its regulation of ultraviolet radiation from the sun.

Canada is a signatory to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and therefore has a treaty obligation to monitor changes in climate, including atmospheric ozone. Models predict that climate change will alter the ozone layer over Canada, possibly aggravating health issues associated with vitamin D deficiency. Sustained measurements are needed to test model predictions and provide information about problems.

The petitioners call upon the Minister of the Environment to develop a plan to ensure the integrity of the ozone monitoring program and commission a report to assess the adequacy of Canadian contributions to the global observing system for climate in support of the United Nations framework convention.

## CANADIAN WHEAT BOARD

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I present a petition with regard to the Canadian Wheat Board. The petition is signed by a number of prairie farmers who believe it is absolutely critical that the government reverse its decision in regard to getting rid of the Canadian Wheat Board.

Earlier today we heard the government refer to one letter saying that individual wants to get rid of the Wheat Board. We all know there are tens of thousands of prairie wheat farmers and barley farmers who want the government to retain the Wheat Board. It is with pleasure that I present this petition today.

\* \* \*

## QUESTIONS ON THE ORDER PAPER

**Mr. Tom Lukiwski (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the following questions will be answered today: Nos. 124, 128 and 130.

[Text]

Question No. 124—**Ms. Rathika Sitsabaiesan:**

With regard to designating Rouge Park as an urban national park: (a) what is a timeline of actions that will be taken; (b) when is the deadline to designate Rouge Park as an urban national park; (c) how much money will be spent on designating Rouge Park as an urban national park; (d) how much money will be allocated for maintenance and restoration of the ecological integrity of the park; (e) who are the regional, federal, municipal, Aboriginal and community stakeholders involved; and (f) will designating Rouge Park as an urban national park create any new jobs and, if so, how many jobs will be created?

*Routine Proceedings*

**Hon. Peter Kent (Minister of the Environment, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, with regard to (a), consistent with the recent Speech from the Throne, Parks Canada will work with provincial, regional, municipal, aboriginal and community stakeholders toward the establishment of a national urban park in the Rouge Valley. As there are no conservation models in Canada that respond to the Rouge Valley's unique requirements, a new park establishment strategy and process is currently being developed by Parks Canada.

Parks Canada intends to pursue an aggressive park establishment schedule. However, it would be premature and inappropriate for Parks Canada to unilaterally determine the timeline of actions to be taken. At present, there is a high priority on building relationships and providing meaningful opportunities for public consultation. This will be a vital and integral part of the negotiations and establishment process for Rouge Valley national urban park.

Parks Canada has initiated a dialogue with the Province of Ontario and other key stakeholders to reach a shared understanding for a collaborative process to create Rouge Valley national urban park. Public consultations will be undertaken to determine priorities and objectives, and ensure broad-based public support. Lands to be included within the park boundary will have to be confirmed in collaboration with the Province of Ontario, Transport Canada and other interested parties. Only then will negotiations take place towards an agreement that will identify the key park management concepts. These park management concepts will, in turn, become part of the legislation to formally create the park.

Although there is a sequence for establishing new protected areas, each situation is different and must reflect the area's unique circumstances. A detailed work plan is being developed in collaboration with the interested parties.

With regard to (b), as with all park establishment processes, Parks Canada does not set a deadline for designation. As stated previously, timelines and circumstances vary, and provisions must be made for the meaningful and respectful involvement of all interested parties.

With regard to (c), Parks Canada will allocate the necessary funding to undertake this initiative. Consistent with other national park establishment processes across the country, Parks Canada will fund required activities such as studies, surveying and public consultation processes. However, there are no conservation models in Canada that respond to the Rouge Valley's unique requirements; consequently, there are no comparable projects that can serve as benchmarks to assess funding requirements. At this time, it is premature to estimate a park establishment budget.

With regard to (d), as no comparable project exists, Rouge Valley national urban park will require a new heritage conservation instrument and an innovative management approach to respond to its unique urban context and requirements. Financial needs and allocations will be identified as this new concept becomes more fully developed. Priorities, objectives and performance indicators will be developed, guided by consultations with a broad range of stakeholders. Resources will be allocated to ensure the integrated delivery of Parks Canada's mandate. This includes the conservation of the park's rich natural and cultural heritage resources, opportunities for outreach and a range of visitor experience opportunities.

The specific attributes of this urban context will also require consideration of mixed land uses, including the promotion of sustainable agriculture.

With regard to (e), stakeholders that have an interest in this initiative will be consulted. Many stakeholders are already involved or well aware of this initiative, but it is expected that more will wish to participate as the project unfolds. Stakeholders already involved or that will become involved include the Province of Ontario; aboriginal communities; Rouge Park Alliance; Toronto Region Conservation Authority, TRCA; City of Toronto; Town of Whitchurch-Stouffville; Town of Richmond Hill; City of Pickering; Town of Markham; Region of York; Region of Durham; Toronto Zoo; University of Toronto—Scarborough; Waterfront Regeneration Trust Corporation; Ontario Nature; Friends of the Rouge Watershed; Save the Rouge Valley System and the farming community.

With regard to (f), the creation of a national urban park in the Rouge Valley will create new jobs. However, it is impossible at this point in time to specify how many. The specific number of jobs will be reflective of the park management concepts, and the priorities and objectives determined through public consultations. As is the case with other heritage places administered by Parks Canada, resources will be allocated to heritage resource protection, learning programs and visitor experience opportunities.

**Question No. 128—Mr. Scott Simms:**

With regard to the Gander Weather Office: (a) what, if any, changes in staffing and mandate or responsibilities have been made within the Gander Weather Office since 2006; and (b) how many employees currently work at the Gander Weather Office and are they responsible for public, marine or aviation forecasting?

**Hon. Peter Kent (Minister of the Environment, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, with regard to (a), there have been no changes to staffing levels, mandate or responsibilities of the Newfoundland and Labrador weather office since being opened in January 2007 following the spring 2006 Prime Minister's announcement.

With regard to (b), there are 16 meteorologists in Gander working in the weather office along, with two computer science staff supporting their information technology required for the centre. The mandate and responsibilities have remained focused on the public and marine forecast and warning programs along with the provision of 1-900 consultation services for the province.

**Question No. 130—Hon. Dominic LeBlanc:**

With regard to applications under the Investment Canada Act, for the period January 1, 2006 to May 31, 2011: (a) how many applications were approved by the government; (b) how many applications were rejected; (c) what measures are in place to ensure that investors live up to undertakings they made to gain approval under the Act; and (d) how many times has the government withdrawn approval as a result of an investor's failure to live up to those undertakings?



**Hon. Christian Paradis (Minister of Industry and Minister of State (Agriculture), CPC):** Mr. Speaker, with regard to (a), over the period from January 1, 2006, to May 31, 2011, 170 applications were approved by the Minister of Industry.

With regard to (b), over the period from January 1, 2006, to May 31, 2011, one application was disallowed by the Minister of Industry: Alliant Techsystems, Inc.'s proposed acquisition of MacDonald, Dettwiler and Associates Ltd.

With regard to (c), under section 25 of the Investment Canada Act investors are required to submit information to the Director of Investments in order to permit the director to determine whether the investment has been implemented in accordance with the plans and undertakings provided in relation to the investment. An evaluation of an investor's performance in implementing its plans and undertakings is ordinarily performed at about 18 months, and more frequently as required, after the implementation of the investment.

The Guidelines—Administrative Procedures, issued by the Minister of Industry under the act, outline the policies that apply to the monitoring of investments that have been reviewed and implemented. If the minister believes that a non-Canadian investor has failed to comply with a written undertaking, the minister may seek replacement undertakings under section 39.1 or pursue enforcement measures under sections 39 and 40.

The act provides enforcement measures which the minister may initiate where he/she believes that an investor has not complied with its obligations under the act. Under section 39, the minister may send a demand letter to the investor requiring it to cease any contravention, remedy a default, show cause why there is no contravention of the act or, in the case of undertakings, justify non-compliance. If an investor fails to comply with a demand letter under section 39, an application may be made on behalf of the minister for an order from a superior court under section 40 of the act. The court may order any measure, including: divestiture, compliance with undertakings, a penalty of \$10,000 for each day of contravention, revocation of voting rights and disposition of voting interests.

With regard to (d), the act does not provide for the withdrawal of approval. The enforcement provisions in the act are described in the response to question (c) above.

\* \* \*

[English]

#### QUESTIONS PASSED AS ORDERS FOR RETURNS

**Mr. Tom Lukiwski (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, if Questions Nos. 114, 116, 117, 118, 125, and 131 could be made orders for returns, these returns would be tabled immediately.

**The Speaker:** Is that agreed?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

[Text]

**Question No. 114—Ms. Françoise Boivin:**

With regard to grants and contributions under \$25,000 granted by Status of Women Canada since January 1, 2008, what are: (a) the names of the recipients; (b)

#### Routine Proceedings

the amounts of the grant or contribution; (c) the dates of the grant or contribution; (d) the dates of length of funding; and (e) the descriptions of the purpose?

(Return tabled)

**Question No. 116—Ms. Françoise Boivin:**

With regard to Status of Women Canada: (a) what have been the departmental budgets annually for the fiscal years 2004 to 2011, separated by program and full-time equivalents; (b) what is the planned spending for the current fiscal year through 2015-2016; (c) how many full-time and part-time employees were lost to attrition from 2004 to 2011; (d) how many full-time or part-time employees were laid-off from 2004 to 2011; (e) how many full-time or part-time employees have been transferred from the organisation from 2004 to 2011; (f) how many full-time and part-time employees were hired from 2004 to 2011; and (g) what is the department's projected attrition rate over the next five years?

(Return tabled)

**Question No. 117—Mr. Robert Chisholm:**

With regard to the implementation of the Community Development program at the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency: (a) when does the agency plan to introduce the performance-based funding model to support Regional Economic Development Organizations (REDOs); (b) what consultations have already taken place concerning the launch of the performance-based funding model and how much money will be allocated to launch the performance-based funding model to support REDOs; (c) how much money has been allocated to provide core funding for REDOs since 2006 to date, (i) by province, (ii) by county; and (d) how much money has been allocated to provide project funding for each REDO in Atlantic Canada since 2006 to date?

(Return tabled)

**Question No. 118—Mr. Robert Chisholm :**

With regard to the implementation of the Community Development program at the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency: (a) how much funding was allocated to support 41 Community Business Development Corporations (CBDCs), from 2006 to date; (b) what changes will take place in the funding of CBDCs, effective April 1, 2011; and (c) how many projects were supported by each of 41 CBDCs, from 2006 to date?

(Return tabled)

**Question No. 125—Ms. Rathika Sitsabaiesan:**

With regard to Canada Student Loans and Grants: (a) how many Grants for Students from Low Income Families were awarded in each fiscal year, from 2006-2007 to 2010-2011; (b) how many Grants for Students from Middle Income Families were awarded in each fiscal year, from 2006-2007 to 2010-2011; (c) what measurement does HRSDC use to determine low income threshold; (d) what measurement does HRSDC use to determine middle income threshold; (e) what are the ethnoracial demographics of recipients of Grants for Students from Low Income Families; (f) what are the ethnoracial demographics of recipients of Grants for Students from Middle Income Families; (g) of the students who apply for Canada Student Loans and Grants, how many do not qualify for Grants for Students from Low Income Families; (h) of the students who apply for Canada Student Loans and Grants, how many do not qualify for Grants for Students from Middle Income Families; (i) what are the ethnoracial demographics of applicants who do not qualify for Grants for Students from Low Income Families; and (j) what are the ethnoracial demographics of applicants who do not qualify for Grants for Students from Middle Income Families?

(Return tabled)

S. O. 52

## Question No. 131—Hon. Dominic LeBlanc:

With regard to information supplied in 2009 by the Government of France to the Government of Canada regarding secret bank accounts in Switzerland: (a) how many Canadians have been identified as having undeclared bank accounts outside of Canada; (b) what action, if any, has been taken by Canadian officials to recover unpaid taxes associated with Canadians' undeclared bank accounts outside of Canada; (c) how many identified Canadians have availed themselves of the Voluntary Disclosure Program (VDP) with the Canada Revenue Agency (CRA); (d) how many identified Canadian accounts have settled with the CRA; (e) how much money has the CRA assessed as a result of investigating these secret bank accounts outside of Canada (i) in unpaid taxes, (ii) in interest, (iii) in fines, (iv) in penalties; (f) how much of the money in (e) has been collected; (g) how many of the cases are under appeal; (h) how many cases remain open; (i) how many more cases does the CRA anticipate will be opened; (j) how many cases have been closed (i.e. the full amount of taxes, interest, fines and penalties have been collected); (k) how much money was collected from the cases in (j) (i) in unpaid taxes, (ii) in interest, (iii) in fines, (iv) in penalties; (l) how many account holders in the cases have made partial payment; (m) of the partial payments made (i) what was the largest amount, (ii) what was the smallest amount, (iii) what was the average amount; (n) of the amounts of money contained in the secret accounts declared or discovered by CRA (i) what was the largest amount, (ii) what was the smallest amount, (iii) what was the average amount; (o) on what date did the CRA become aware of the names of Canadians with accounts outside of Canada that were obtained by the Government of France; (p) on what dates did CRA begin its investigations; (q) on what date did the first audit of an individual account holder begin; (r) how many of the identified Canadians with bank accounts outside of Canada (i) have had their account(s) audited, (ii) have had their account(s) reassessed, (iii) have been the subject of a compliance action; (s) how many of the identified Canadians with bank accounts outside of Canada (i) have not had their account(s) audited, (ii) have not had their account(s) reassessed, (iii) have not been the subject of a compliance action; (t) how many tax evasion charges were laid; and (u) has the Government of Canada made any changes to the VDP in the past 24 months?

(Return tabled)

[English]

**Mr. Tom Lukiwski:** Mr. Speaker, finally, I ask that the remaining questions be allowed to stand.

**The Speaker:** Is that agreed?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

\* \* \*

## REQUEST FOR EMERGENCY DEBATE

## CANADIAN WHEAT BOARD

**Mr. Frank Valeriote (Guelph, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I stand in the House to request an emergency debate on the government's refusal to hold a plebiscite pursuant to section 47.1 of the Canadian Wheat Board Act before introducing legislation to kill the single desk marketing system.

Section 47.1 of the Canadian Wheat Board Act clearly states:

The Minister shall not cause to be introduced in Parliament a bill that would exclude any kind, type, class or grade of wheat or barley, or wheat or barley produced in any area in Canada...unless... (a) the Minister has consulted with the board about the exclusion or extension; and, (b) the producers of the grain have voted in favour of the exclusion or extension, the voting process having been determined by the Minister.

Despite his ideological wanderings or rhetorical dissensions, the minister must let Wheat Board members decide if their sales and marketing arm should be allowed to continue to operate in its current form and protect farmers by selling the grains the board currently sells, namely wheat and barley, at the best price possible for its membership, or if it should be torn away from them without any thought to what will fill the void the government intends to create.

Rather than giving Canadian farmers the right to choose, he is telling them that while this may affect their livelihoods and small-town economies, their voice does not matter. He is telling them that he will not follow the act he is responsible for governing and that he will not protect western Canadian farmers or their rights under the act.

The institution of the Canadian Wheat Board is considered so sacrosanct as to have legislation created, such as that which exists in section 47.1 of the act, to prevent the very abuse that is being perpetrated by the minister.

Should you not allow the debate to go ahead, Mr. Speaker, any opportunity for western Canadian grain farmers to determine their own future with the single desk system will be foreclosed. You and you alone now stand between the law being followed and the law being violated.

Farmers feed Canadian families. They have earned the right to choose, and the government has not earned any sort of mandate to disenfranchise a single western Canadian grain producer by circumventing the Canada Wheat Board Act.

Given the reluctance of the minister to honour this particular provision of the act, the Canadian Wheat Board mailed 68,000 ballots to wheat and barley farmers across the prairies this summer. With a 56% participation rate, a majority of both wheat and barley farmers voted to maintain the single desk under the Canadian Wheat Board.

In 2005, an economic impact analysis conducted by PricewaterhouseCoopers revealed the positive economic impact for Winnipeg, for western Canadian farmers and for Canadians as a whole from the continued existence of the single desk marketing system.

It is not up to me, to any member of Parliament or to the minister to decide if the board should maintain its mandate or if it should be dissolved. It is up to farmers. I understand why western Canadian farmers would want it to continue to exist. What I do not understand is why the minister would want to dismantle an organization that is of major economic benefit to western Canada without asking them their opinion, as the law requires him to do.

The notion of self-determination has been codified in other pieces of legislation in this country, whether it is aboriginal rights or the rights of employees to negotiate unfettered. When these rights are codified, it is done for very particular reasons. When granted, these rights are a clear statement by a government that these rights—the rights of farmers, of workers or of aboriginal Canadians—cannot be trodden upon without the whole engagement or consent of everyone involved.

This does not just protect the single desk system, but the right of Canadian farmers to determine their own destiny and their own livelihood.

The Prime Minister made it clear in his speech after the May 2 election that his government would be governing for all Canadians, not just Conservatives. Even Conservative farmers have approached me, concerned with the minister's Ahab-like pursuit of the destruction of the single desk.



Therefore, Mr. Speaker, for the reasons set out to you in my letter this morning, I request that you find that this issue meets the requirements for an emergency debate set out in subsections 52(5) and 52(6) of the Standing Orders, and that this House do now adjourn to address the requirement under section 47.1 of the Canadian Wheat Board Act for the Minister for the Canadian Wheat Board to hold a plebiscite before taking any action to change the current formation of the single desk marketing and sales system.

• (1525)

#### SPEAKER'S RULING

**The Speaker:** I thank the hon. member for his intervention.

I do not think that this meets the test of the Standing Orders, especially given the fact that there will be ample opportunity to raise issues that he has.

If and when there is a bill presented to the House, there will be ample opportunity to discuss these issues then, so therefore I do not think it meets the requirements to have an emergency debate.

## GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[English]

### KEEPING CANADA'S ECONOMY AND JOBS GROWING ACT

The House resumed consideration of the motion that Bill C-13, An Act to implement certain provisions of the 2011 budget as updated on June 6, 2011 and other measures, be read the second time and referred to a committee.

**Hon. Lisa Raitt (Minister of Labour, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, as Canada's labour minister, I am very pleased today to take part in this important debate on keeping Canada's economy and jobs growing act. This act focuses on strengthening Canada's economic recovery by improving the ability of businesses and entrepreneurs to respond to emerging growth opportunities and to create jobs.

**Hon. Jim Karygiannis:** Mr. Speaker, on a point of order, I served your office with a request for an emergency debate on the Coptic situation and I am sure you will acknowledge that.

I want to thank everybody today on both sides of the House for agreeing on a motion. I hope it is okay that I withdraw that request and want to thank everybody in the House who co-operated. We reached consensus on a motion that is affecting the plight of the Copts and other ethnic minorities in Egypt and religious minorities around the world, and I want to thank everyone for that.

**The Speaker:** I thank the hon. member for Scarborough—Agincourt for indicating that to the House.

The hon. Minister of Labour.

**Hon. Lisa Raitt:** As always, this government is concerned about and is focused on what matters the most to hard-working Canadians: jobs and economic growth. The bill we are debating today includes key elements of the next phase of Canada's economic action plan, a plan that worked to protect Canada from the worst of the global recession.

#### Government Orders

We have had seven straight quarters of economic growth, and since July 2009 nearly 650,000 net new jobs have been created. More importantly, over 80% of them have been full-time positions. This is great news for Canadians. We are definitely on the right track.

Canada's fiscal position is among the strongest in the world's top-performing advanced economies. However, we must be mindful that the global recovery remains fragile and that there are still too many Canadians looking for work. Too many hard-working Canadians have been affected by the economic downturn, and that is why the keeping Canada's economy and jobs growing act proposes such a large number of strong initiatives to promote job creation, to provide support for communities, to help families invest in education and training and to respect the taxpayer.

As the Minister of Labour, I would like to turn my attention to one of the aspects of this legislation that provides support particularly to workers who have been affected by an employer bankruptcy or receivership. In our economic action plan, we established the wage earner protection program, or WEPP, to help workers manage one of the toughest challenges that they ever face: going without hard-earned pay because an employer has gone bankrupt. As a direct result of this very important program, eligible workers who lose their jobs and who were owed money in the six months prior to their employer going bankrupt or being subject to receivership can now be compensated for unpaid wages and for vacation pay. This compensation also includes severance and termination pay, with workers receiving up to a maximum of \$3,400.

The WEPP has proven itself as an important program and has provided assistance to a great many people who have been hard hit through losing their jobs out of no fault of their own. Since July 2008, over 40,000 WEPP claimants have received \$89.5 million in payments.

The keeping Canada's economy and jobs growing act would provide additional good news workers caught in a bankruptcy or a receivership situation. We are proposing an expansion of the WEPP to cover employees who lose their jobs when their employer's attempt at restructuring takes longer than six months but is subsequently unsuccessful. This enhanced protection would provide an estimated \$4.5 million annually to support workers affected by the bankruptcy of their employer. It would ensure that employees are not unfairly penalized if their employer tries to restructure in the face of financial difficulties, but fails.

*Government Orders*

The keeping Canada's economy and jobs growing act also announces the government's proposal to amend the Canadian Human Rights Act and the Canada Labour Code to eliminate mandatory retirement in the federal jurisdiction. We are taking this step because we believe that forcing an employee to retire by reason of age is a form of discrimination and a form of unequal treatment. Canadians are living longer and are more active than ever before, so people should be able to choose when they retire, unless there are compelling reasons, such as health or safety reasons, that prohibit them from choosing themselves.

This piece of legislation strikes the right balance between fiscal prudence and targeted investment, and it is no surprise that there have been very many favourable reactions to proposals from the next phase of Canada's economic action plan. As a few examples, Gary Corbett, president of the Professional Institute of the Public Service of Canada welcomed this elimination of a mandatory retirement age and the role it will play in mitigating the brain drain of experienced workers.

• (1530)

The Canadian Taxpayers Federation's national research director, Derek Fildebrandt, also commended the elimination of mandatory retirement and said:

People have a right to determine how long they work, and this is a major step towards eliminating poverty for seniors...

These are only a few among so many favourable statements that have been made in support of the next phase of Canada's economic action plan.

I will take a moment to describe the labour program's role in supporting economic recovery and of course in building a fair and prosperous society.

I am a big proponent that safe and productive workplaces contribute to our economic prosperity. One of the key roles of the labour program is to support occupational health and safety by carrying out workplace investigations of work-related injuries and occupational diseases. We determine causes as well as strategies for prevention and resolution because Canadians should be able to return home safe and secure after a day or night at work.

I have held national round tables across Canada to examine occupational health and safety in the workplace, some of which focused on mental health issues. Our goal was to learn from the range of stakeholders, including employers, employees, other levels of government and academics about current and emerging occupational health and safety issues and how well these are being addressed by the federal government.

Mental health in the workplace, violence prevention, and in Iqaluit northern issues on health and safety, were discussed at the round tables.

Stakeholders across the board believe that respectful workplaces and emotional intelligence need to be promoted as core values for a productive and sustainable society and economy. The National Round Tables on Occupational Health and Safety underscored the importance of our program's focus on healthy and safe workplaces.

I have also met with stakeholders to discuss important issues, such as fair wages, hours of work and women in the workforce. These discussions provided valuable knowledge and insight on issues affecting today's workplaces. They also gave me a better understanding of the challenges that employers and employees sometimes have to face.

The labour program works to ensure that employment standards are respected as well, especially regarding pay, dismissal, leave and hours of work, because employment standards set the foundation for creating productive workplaces.

These standards help protect the rights of workers. They help foster cooperative relationships between employers and workers and provide the necessary conditions for a productive economy.

I am pleased that we have successfully conciliated about 1,000 unjust dismissal complaints, partly through the use of alternative dispute resolution techniques, and have recovered \$4.6 million in unpaid wages for workers in the federal sector.

As well, we continue to promote employment equity and related initiatives. Our goal is to foster inclusive and fair workplaces that take advantage of the skills and talents of all Canadians.

Finally, we continue to work in collaboration with both provincial and territorial governments, as well as our international partners, to identify and craft policies that can best support the development of enterprises and workforces, leading to strong and sustained growth.

I will also take time to talk about my constituents in Halton and how the initiatives proposed in this bill benefit them in their everyday lives.

There are a number of small businesses in the riding of Halton and a number of small business owners. Just as the CFIB has applauded the government's position and provision of a temporary hiring credit for small businesses, I know that businesses in my riding will be enthusiastic about this initiative as well.

This bill encourages additional hiring for small businesses through this temporary hiring credit and this is good news for job creation in my riding.

Also contained in the bill is a permanent annual investment of \$2 billion in the gas tax fund which provides that predictable, long-term infrastructure funding for municipalities. As well, specific beneficial initiatives are: the volunteer firefighters tax credit; the new family caregiver tax credit; and, the new children's arts tax credit. There are many in here for the good people of Halton.

In conclusion, this act builds on our work to protect Canadian workers and employers and on strengthening labour management relations while playing a leadership role in intergovernmental and international labour affairs.



• (1535)

**Mr. Scott Simms (Bonavista—Gander—Grand Falls—Windsor, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Minister of Labour regarding the workplace and in particular the current workplace in my area. She is familiar with Cape Breton. I am from central and northeastern Newfoundland.

One of the biggest elements of the workforce is the existence of seasonal labour. Earlier today I believe the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance talked about the 45-day work week.

I will provide the minister with an example that I would like her to comment on. In a place like Port Union, which earlier lost its plant for only one season, it is harder for that particular plant to maintain a workforce in the foreseeable future if a 45-day work week does not exist.

Therefore, we must look for ways to promote EI reform in areas of high unemployment. Could the minister comment on that?

I apologize if that is not particularly germane to her speech.

• (1540)

**Hon. Lisa Raitt:** Mr. Speaker, tangentially on the topic that the hon. member brought up, in the first round of Canada's economic action plan the biggest challenge was dealing with single industry towns. We approached it from a number of different areas. One way was to help the community diversify and that is by putting in infrastructure. I know we did an awful lot of work on the forestry file to ensure that those communities wanting to diversify their base could do so by having new industries and creating new jobs so that people could stay in those communities. There are many benefits to having people stay in those communities, especially for those who live there.

As well, we introduced temporary measures with respect to employment insurance to ensure that older workers were able to obtain the retraining they needed.

Finally, not necessarily for the area from which the member comes but in my area in Halton we found that work sharing specifically was a very important program, one which I have been told the United States thinks was the key initiative that allowed us to recover from the recession as well as we did.

**Ms. Elizabeth May (Saenich—Gulf Islands, GP):** Mr. Speaker, as someone who enjoyed attending law school and practised law, I always felt that a bill's title should reflect its content. In this bill on jobs and economic growth I do not see a connection to clause 181 which removes campaign financing in public form, which is not any part of economic growth, and which does not even begin to touch the largest of taxpayer support to political parties. Would the Minister of Labour comment on that?

**Hon. Lisa Raitt:** Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for pointing out that the Cape Breton caucus does indeed get along outside the House, though not necessarily always inside the House. I also appreciate that she stood in defence of another member from Cape Breton at the other end of the House today.

Our government is committed to strengthening integrity and accountability both in government and political activity. We have always opposed direct taxpayer subsidies to political parties. We

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believe that political parties should rely primarily on their supporters for financing. That is why we are introducing legislation to gradually reduce the pay-per-vote subsidy starting April 1, 2012 until it is completely eliminated in 2015. That is also why the next phase of Canada's economic action plan is following through on the specific campaign commitment we made to defend the public interest.

We indicated that we have a duty to use taxpayer dollars wisely, especially in a time of fiscal constraint and when families are struggling to make ends meet. That is the underpinning as to why we are doing it, how we are doing it and when we are doing it.

**Mrs. Cathy McLeod (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of National Revenue, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, while listening to the debate today I heard many opposition members talk about there being no plan or that it is not working. One need only look at the results of seven periods of economic growth and an employment rate that while still not as good as we would like it to be is certainly better.

Could the member speak to the fact that we indeed have a plan and share it again with opposition members? Perhaps they have not heard but phase two of the economic action plan is working.

**Hon. Lisa Raitt:** Mr. Speaker, the government is indeed focused on what the next phase of the economic action plan is about. It is about supporting job creation, families and communities. It is about investing in innovation, education and training. It is about preserving Canada's fiscal advantage. The most telling part of it coming from my department is the quote from the Canadian Labour Congress wherein it stated:

—the CLC has pushed hard for an increase in the Guaranteed Income Supplement (GIS) paid to 1.6 million low income seniors. “Minister Flaherty has made a modest improvement to the GIS in this budget. This is a win for every senior living in poverty in Canada...”

[Translation]

**Mr. Louis Plamondon (Bas-Richelieu—Nicolet—Bécancour, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to participate in this debate on the budget implementation bill. It goes without saying that we support some measures in this second budget bill, but unfortunately, some measures are unacceptable. That is why we will vote against it today.

The first problem we have is with the federal government's proposal to centralize securities in Toronto. There has been opposition to this not only in Quebec, but also in Alberta, Saskatchewan and Manitoba. Opposition was particularly strong in Quebec, since it would mean moving all economic life to Toronto. The government's desire to do this is nothing new. Members will recall that on May 26, 2010, it introduced a draft bill for this purpose. Then, in July 2010, despite opposition from four provinces, the Conservative government started implementing the transition plan for the Canadian Securities Regulatory Authority.

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The government seems to forget that securities regulation falls under the exclusive constitutional authority of Quebec and the provinces. Let us not forget that the government's proposed Canada-wide securities commission does not respect Quebec's responsibility for property and civil rights. Authority over securities is given to the provinces by virtue of their jurisdiction over property and civil rights under subsection 92(3) of the Constitution Act, 1867. It is plain and simple. Nevertheless, the government wants to move forward.

The current passport system, as we call it in finance terms, works very well. With this system, a company that registers in one participating province can do business with people in all the other participating provinces. Every province, except Ontario, is part of the rules harmonization project. This Canada-wide commission will strip Quebec of a very important economic tool. Major decisions will be made outside Quebec. The Autorité des marchés financiers has an awareness of Quebec's distinct nature and needs that a single commission will not have.

For example, jobs in the financial sector are threatened. This is a key sector of Quebec's economy that accounts for 155,000 direct jobs. In all, 300,000 jobs in Quebec are connected with the financial sector. With their proposed Canada-wide commission, the Conservatives are trying to do Montreal out of what it has for Toronto's benefit and are encroaching on the jurisdictions of Quebec and the provinces. For these reasons, the National Assembly and the business community in Quebec reject the proposal.

The voluntary membership that has been spoken of is a ploy. By destroying the passport system and counting on conflicts among the regulatory bodies, the Conservative government is creating a reason for stock-issuing companies to turn to the national commission.

Contrary to what the Conservative government is saying, the existence of such a commission would not have prevented investors from being fleeced by white-collar criminals such as Earl Jones. He was a criminal who was not registered anywhere. In Montreal or in Toronto, he would have committed his crimes the same way. It is up to the RCMP to hunt down criminals. This should not be part of the debate.

Similarly, the existence of a single commission in the United States did not prevent Bernard Madoff from defrauding investors of over \$50 billion. In addition, during the merging of the Toronto and Montreal stock exchanges into the well-known TMX Group, the AMF came up with a series of conditions that had to be met in order for it to accept the transaction, including, in particular, maintaining a certain number of jobs in Montreal in the derivatives sector. Since TMX Group is regulated by the Ontario Securities Commission, which would be part of the new Canada-wide commission, there is a real concern that the conditions set out by the AMF will no longer be respected.

• (1545)

In that case, what would stop TMX Group from moving all of its activities from Montreal to Toronto? That is a real danger. This commission will also be detrimental to the use of French in business, let us not forget. It is unlikely that companies registered with the single national commission, whether or not they are from Quebec, will be required to publish in English and French. The Bloc Québécois reiterates its opposition to the creation of a national

securities commission. The Bloc Québécois supports the current harmonization of the rules governing the financial system. The passport mechanism maintains the autonomy and jurisdictions of Quebec and the provinces. This mechanism has existed since 2008 and is also used in the European Union. Thus, it is not something that is unique to Canada and Quebec. It is an international way of seeing things that respects all jurisdictions, including the provinces.

Canada's securities regulatory system works very well. A coalition of business people representing Quebecor, Jean Coutu, Cascades, the Association de femmes en finances and its 350 members, the bar, notaries, Power Corporation and Mouvement Desjardins all confirmed it in 2010. Many experts also oppose the plan for a single securities commission. Among them we have Pierre Lortie, the former President and CEO of the Montreal Stock Exchange, the constitutional expert Henri Brun, Yvon Allaire and Michel Nadeau from the Institute for Governance of Private and Public Organizations, and Jeffrey MacIntosh from the Toronto Stock Exchange Chair in Capital Markets Law at the University of Toronto. He shares our opinion even though he is from Toronto. All the political parties in Quebec are against this initiative. There have even been some unanimous motions from the National Assembly.

Let us take a brief look back to see how we got here. From 1970 to 2005, the idea of a single securities commission surfaced and resurfaced sporadically. The idea of giving Canada a single regulatory body for securities has been resurfacing for more than 40 years. Since 2003, the subject has been at the forefront of the federal political scene. The Liberals, who were in power at the time, had formed a committee of experts to study the possibility of setting up a single regulatory agency in Canada. The surprising thing is that the committee was far from being definitive. But today the Liberals and the Conservatives agree on centralizing everything in Toronto.

We should remember that, since coming to power, the Conservatives have attempted to force the issue. The 2006 budget revisited the idea. It announced that the government was going to work with the provinces. But if you work with the provinces and they say no, that they do not want change, the matter should go no further. The federal government often forgets that it was created by the will of the provinces. It is a creation of the provinces. It is not up to the federal government to tell the provinces what to do. It is up to the provinces to tell the federal government its expectations about how things will work. The provinces have delegated the powers to the federal government. This is often forgotten.



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The Minister of Finance reiterated in 2007 that a panel of experts would be set up to study the creation of a single regulator. The 2008 budget again confirmed the government's intention despite the opposition from the provinces. In 2009, the expert panel on securities established by the Minister of Finance tabled its report, which was not unanimous. Action has also been taken recently, as we can see today in the government's statement on finances. It is still determined to move forward without waiting for the Supreme Court's ruling because the government is in a difficult position due to the provinces' opposition. Alberta and Quebec are mounting a legal challenge.

• (1550)

I hope that the Conservative government will revise its position to satisfy the demands of the provinces. For the time being, if Quebec is opposed, we will vote against the bill

• (1555)

**Mr. Jean-François Fortin (Haute-Gaspésie—La Mitis—Matapédia, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to congratulate my colleague on his excellent speech. Once again, he clearly stated the Bloc's understanding of this bill. Why does he feel that the Conservative government is stubbornly moving ahead with the securities commission initiative in Toronto, despite the fact that it goes against the unanimous will of the National Assembly in Quebec City, which wants to retain full authority in this area? I would like to hear from the member.

**Mr. Louis Plamondon:** Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the hon. member for his question. It seems that this desire to centralize exists not only in the finance department, but also in the justice department. An omnibus bill that affects a number of areas has recently been tabled. It also infringes upon provincial jurisdictions. For example, Quebec has developed a vision for young offenders that has been cited as an example around the world. In fact, 85% of youth who offend are rehabilitated through this system, without jail time. The Conservatives' centralist vision focuses on repression instead of prevention, which centralizes power in the field of justice.

And exactly the same thing is happening in the arts and in finance. This securities commission is very symptomatic of the Conservative government's desire to centralize. Thousands of Quebec jobs would be transferred. There is opposition in Quebec and in the National Assembly, of course, but Alberta, Manitoba and Saskatchewan are also opposed to this. Conservative talk about decentralization and understanding the regions and the provinces is completely at odds with the proposal of a single securities commission in Toronto.

[English]

**Ms. Lois Brown (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of International Cooperation, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I am honoured to stand today in support of Bill C-13, Keeping Canada's Economy and Jobs Growing Act. The passage of this bill is very important to my riding of Newmarket—Aurora, as it is to all Canadians.

Bill C-13 would complete the passage of budget 2011. It contains measures that are critically important for Canada's long-term prosperity by boosting research and development, innovation and productivity. It speaks to what Canadians elected us to do, focusing on economic growth, job creation and stability.

I will direct most of my comments today on how Bill C-13 supports job creation in my riding. Over the past months, I have met with thousands of residents in my community, whether at the door, on the street, or in my office, and, by far, the top of mind priorities above all others were jobs and the economy. They made it very clear to me that they wanted their government to focus squarely on these priorities, jobs and economic growth. Why is this? It is because a stable, growing economy creates job opportunities. It supports families and it creates confidence. It is the fundamental backbone of what vibrant communities and a prosperous nation are all about.

Newmarket—Aurora is comprised of thousands of entrepreneurs, most of them small and medium sized businesses. They will all benefit from the one time hiring credit for small business of up to \$1,000 contained in budget 2011 and formalized in Bill C-13. Through this measure, over 525,000 employers across Canada will be helped with the costs of additional hiring. This is an average of almost 1,400 businesses in each of the 308 ridings across the country. With this initiative, a small business can hire one additional worker at a salary of up to \$40,000 or two part-time workers at a salary of up to \$20,000 each without having to pay additional EI premiums.

Entrepreneurs in my riding would benefit from budget 2011 measures to support the development of clean energy technologies through a \$97 million investment over two years to renew funding for technology and innovation in the areas of clean energy and energy efficiency. Measures, such as the new children's arts tax credit and the extension of the eco-energy retrofit homes program, are boosting economic activity in hardware shops, contracting companies, music and art stores across my riding, just as they are throughout the country.

Manufacturing and processing businesses would benefit from the extension of the temporary accelerated capital cost allowance rate that encourages investments in machinery and equipment. This measure builds squarely upon our previous support for the manufacturing sector.

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Last week, Statistics Canada released a report showing that manufacturing sales rose 1.4% to \$47.6 billion in August, the highest level since October 2008. In fact, last Friday, a news release from AirBoss of America crossed my desk. AirBoss has its head office in my hometown of Newmarket with manufacturing plants in Kitchener, Ontario; Acton-Vale, Quebec; and North Carolina. The news release announced the securement of two contracts worth \$20 million with the U.S. department of defense in supplying that company's rubber based products. So we know that strategic investments, like the accelerated capital cost allowance rate, the hiring tax credit for small business and the expansion of tax support for clean energy generation, are working to create jobs for Canadians.

Indeed, earlier this month, *Forbes* magazine rated Canada as the best place in the world for businesses to grow and create jobs.

I am very excited that budget 2011 provides \$20 million to support young entrepreneurs by providing mentorship, resources and start-up financing through the Canadian Youth Business Foundation. Many business icons today began their careers as budding entrepreneurs and this investment would help create the business leaders of tomorrow.

I would like to share a few examples from my riding of Newmarket—Aurora of how these initiatives create jobs.

● (1600)

Earlier this year, I announced a contribution of \$115,000 for the National Research Council of Canada industrial research assistance program, or IRAP, to Treefrog Interactive Inc.

Treefrog is an award-winning Newmarket graphic design and web development agency and a shining example of a leading-edge small business. The IRAP funds, made possible through Canada's economic action plan, allowed Treefrog to fund an innovative research and development project and create new products for local and international markets. Sean Stephens, the CEO of Treefrog Interactive, said in February of this year:

These last few years, help from the federal government stimulus has been a clear and inspiring drive for us at Treefrog. Where many talk about a period of "recession", we at Treefrog talk about a period of "innovation". Thanks to IRAP, we have greatly increased our staff, doubled our revenue, significantly matured our products and helped many other businesses grow through web initiatives in the region—mostly through innovations in our products. This period of incredible growth has been through that extra little "shot in the arm" from IRAP—and we have Canada, through IRAP and the federal government, to thank for it.

Here is another success story in my riding.

Last year, a collaborative project led by the Newmarket Chamber of Commerce involving the Newmarket Public Library, South Lake Regional Health Centre, town of Newmarket and Newmarket-Tay Power Distribution received \$2.1 million from Canada's action plan for a shared digital infrastructure project. The project created new community partnerships and received national recognition.

The Newmarket Chamber of Commerce was able to parlay this investment into an asset now benefiting hundreds of entrepreneurs, businesses, community organizations and residents through this information-sharing infrastructure. The past president of the Newmarket Chamber of Commerce, Jim Gragtmans, regarding the success of this project said last year, "Dozens of jobs have been

created. New creative and effective partnerships have been established and we are only beginning".

Canada's economic action plan has assisted many businesses in my riding to expand, innovate and create jobs. In the town of Aurora, for example, Axiom Group Inc. was able to extend its product line and open new markets through support from the southern Ontario development fund and industrial research assistance program.

In fact, last year I was honoured to present, on behalf of the minister of state, a Canadian innovation leader certificate to Axiom President, Perry Rizzo, in recognition of that company's success. On the assistance that Mr. Rizzo received from Canada's action plan, he said:

We appreciate the SODP and its contribution to helping small to medium sized businesses like Axiom create jobs and stimulate economic growth in the local community of Aurora and abroad.

We know that small business owners and entrepreneurs create jobs and generate wealth in communities across Canada. Our government declared 2011 the official year of the entrepreneur to help increase public awareness of the important role played by small businesses.

It is most fitting that we are debating Bill C-13, keeping Canada's economy and jobs growing act, during small business week. By supporting our small and medium-sized businesses we support all Canadians by facilitating the conditions for investment and job creation.

It is important to note that Bill C-13 supports the creation of jobs and economic growth by allowing the continuation of work done by the red tape reduction commission to root out and cut business red tape. We know that red tape ties up Canadian businesses and entrepreneurs, reduces their competitiveness, and forces them to spend time and money that could be better spent strengthening Canada's economic recovery.

In January 2011, our government fulfilled its budget 2010 commitment by establishing the red tape reduction commission, to which I am honoured to have been appointed. Bill C-13 allows the means to continue this important work and the commission will present its final recommendations for lasting reforms in the coming months based on the "What Was Heard" report released last month.

● (1605)

I also want to note that among the many significant measures contained in Bill C-13, of great importance to my riding and all municipalities across the country is the legislation to make permanent gas tax funding for municipalities. It is why Bill C-13 and its key job creating measures, like the hiring credit for small businesses, are critically important as we continue to solidify our recovery and position Canada for a prosperous future. That is what Canadians want.



[Translation]

**Mr. Pierre Dionne Labelle (Rivière-du-Nord, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I heard my esteemed colleague talking about the reduction in the number of public servants, especially at Public Works and Government Services Canada.

Is my colleague aware of what is happening right now in the City of Montreal? It has adopted exactly the same approach to public service reductions, especially in any area related to engineering.

The city is left with a public service that is incapable of judging the nature and value of the work it is responsible for. Is this a good way to go, from a public administration perspective? Does anyone really think this will save any money?

[English]

**Ms. Lois Brown:** Mr. Speaker, no, I did not actually address that in my speech, but I am very pleased to speak to it. Our government was given a very strong mandate to take care of taxpayers' dollars and to be responsible to taxpayers for what we spend. We have asked every department to go through its own strategic review and to find savings within their department. As we find those, we will pass those savings on to taxpayers.

**Mr. Scott Simms (Bonaville—Gander—Grand Falls—Windsor, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, in her speech she talked a lot about these places that have created jobs over the past little while.

I read headlines from her riding with regard to 2008-09 and about all the job losses that were at the Newmarket—Aurora plants, concerning Magna. I wonder at what level the economic action plan has actually worked for these people because I am still hearing quite a bit of noise from that area about all the job losses that took place. I wonder if she would like to comment on that.

• (1610)

**Ms. Lois Brown:** Mr. Speaker, my hon. colleague is correct. We did go through a drastic job loss. In fact, overnight, we lost 800 jobs when two of the Magna plants were closed very suddenly.

However, through the work of the economic action plan, many of the plants that I talked about in my speech have created jobs that have created opportunities for those people to be hired into new positions. For people who were in need of retraining, we put in place the measures through employment insurance that gave them the opportunity for retraining. We also put in place the work share program which preserved a number of jobs that could have otherwise been lost, and those jobs are still ongoing.

**Mr. Jack Harris (St. John's East, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I know the speaker did not mention it, but her colleague, the Minister of Labour, talked about what she referred to as the per vote subsidy and how this is an unfair subsidy of political parties by the taxpayer.

However, I wonder if she would care to comment on the distinction between what this particular method of financing political parties, which is pretty democratic in nature, each voter, regardless of his or financial ability, can trigger a contribution to the public purse to a political party by his or her vote; for example, over a four year cycle, \$8.00. Whereas what is left in place is a system whereby if an individual gives \$100, for example, to the Conservative Party that triggers a taxpayer contribution of \$75 back to the taxpayer, effectively subsidizing the contribution.

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So, we really have a system that is being left in place that actually can only be accessed by people who have money; whereas the individual \$2.00 per vote payment is a more democratic one available to every single person.

Does she not think that it is much fairer to say that each voter can trigger a public contribution by his or her vote rather than by someone who can afford to contribute \$100 to a political party?

**Ms. Lois Brown:** Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to speak to that because it really was a campaign promise that we made, that we would reduce these subsidies.

We believe that a political party ought to be able to persuade citizens of Canada to support it through their own contributions by the programs that it is putting forward or the philosophy that it represents and every Canadian, regardless of the money that he or she has is able to contribute any amount he or she wants. Five dollars is a contribution that we have seen in the past and I believe that every Canadian has the opportunity to donate that from his or her own pocket. It is a very fair system. It is a very generous system that we have. I believe that Canadians will choose to support the political party that best represents them.

**Mr. Don Davies (Vancouver Kingsway, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise in the House today to give the perspective of the constituents of Vancouver Kingsway to Bill C-13. I have read the bill and given a great deal of thought and analysis to it. I would like to point out a few things that come to my mind as some preliminary observations about the bill.

First of all, the bill provides some positive measures. The bill also contains some negative measures and most notably from my analysis, the predominant feature of the bill is that it is marked by what it does not deal with, what it is silent on.

In terms of some of the positive measures that are contained in the bill, I would like to point out some of them and congratulate the government on picking up what are some policies that most Canadians would support. First, the bill offers partial loan forgiveness for family physicians, nurses and nurse practitioners who begin practising in underserved rural or remote areas. This is a provision that I personally must stand in support of in the House because it mirrors in part a private member's bill that I drafted a year and half ago and introduced in the House.

I proposed a bill that would reward doctors, nurses and nurse practitioners who serve in underserved areas with a freeze on their Canadian student loans for the first five years of practice and then for each year from year 6 through 10, they would have their loan erased at the rate of 20% per year meaning that rural and underserved areas in our health care system in terms of family doctors, nurses and nurse practitioners would get that very important service. People who practised in those areas would have their federal loans forgiven as a result of that commitment.

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The bill also introduces a family caregiver tax credit for caregivers of infirm dependants. Once again, that is a positive measure although, as has been pointed out by many experts in the tax field, the government is moving toward increasing reliance on the use of tax credits and that reflects a certain philosophy of delivering government programs that is not without its problems. Most notably, it requires Canadian families to lay out the money first and then claim the tax credit much later. For millions of Canadians that is simply not a reality. For millions of Canadian families they simply do not have that money to lay out at first and so tax credits are of limited utility.

The bill also provides a temporary measure to refund a portion of employer premiums for small business. This is truly a case of giving with one hand and taking away with the other, although one must support a measure that would refund a portion of EI premiums for employers and workers in this challenged economic time. On the other hand, we must also remember that it was the government that is raising EI premiums starting in January to the tune of \$2 billion per year.

Taking back money or giving businesses the ability to save some money after having their overall premiums raised is a cynical approach to politics that Canadians should be aware of. Also, Canadians must always remember when we talk about EI that the EI surplus of over \$50 billion, premiums paid by the businesses and the workers of this country to create an insurance fund for them to draw in times of high unemployment, which as I will talk about in a few minutes we are experiencing right now in Canada, and taking that money and putting it into general revenue is still an unredressed problem that cries out for redress.

The bill also expands the eligibility for accelerated capital cost allowance for clean energy generation and conservation equipment. Again, that is a positive measure; however, in the grand scheme of things and I see my colleague from Halifax is here who has done wonderful work on the environment file, I am sure she would point out to the House, as has been done day after day, that this measure is really a drop in the ocean in terms of what Canada must do in terms of clean energy creation and environmental protection.

• (1615)

In terms of some of the negative things in this bill, as we have heard, the bill proposes to end the per vote subsidy for political parties that receive more than a certain percentage of the vote. If I am not mistaken, I think it is more than 5% of the vote. In my view this is a regressive policy and it amounts to poor public policy at the same time. Canada has created what can be fairly regarded as one of the finest and fairest election finance systems in the world. Canadians want an electoral system that is fair and is controlled by the citizens of our country.

The features of our federal campaign and electoral finance system are as follows. We have put in measures that limit the contributions of any one person to \$1,100, so that takes big money out of politics. It has eliminated donations entirely from corporations and trade unions. That has taken the influence of non-individuals out of politics. It has set spending limits in what we can spend in a particular riding in an election and what we can spend nationally in a campaign. It evens the playing field and again it takes big money out

of our political system. In short, it is a system that enshrines the concept of democracy run by people, paid for by people and to serve the people.

Canadians have a great interest democracy. Democracy is not free. A democratic system must be paid for. However, a democracy that is paid for by the public means that we do not have a democracy that is bought and paid for by private interests. I think that is what Canadians want. They want a publicly financed democracy, not a privately financed democracy.

Interestingly, in Afghanistan right now our troops are fighting ostensibly for the establishment of democracy in there. The public financing of the electoral system here in Canada helps maintain a democracy in our country.

As has been pointed out by my colleague from Newfoundland just a few moments ago, providing public money based on the number of votes that a party gets at the rate of \$2 per vote is the fairest way of all to finance political parties in our country. The government has said that it does not want that. It wants parties to go out and raise money from private sector citizens, that this does not represent a subsidy, but we know that is not true.

People who contribute to a party get back, at taxpayer funded expense, 75% of the first \$400 they donate and that declines to 66% for the next \$350 and then 50% for the remainder of the \$1,100. Therefore, we do have public subsidies of donations to political parties. The only question is one of philosophy, whether, as the Conservatives want, we do that through private interest as opposed to public funds, which the New Democrats support.

I want to talk briefly about the economy in our country. Millions of Canadians across the country know they are having a difficult time right now. They know this economy is not working for them. Statistic after statistic shows that over the last 25 years there is a growing gap between the wealthy and the poor in our country.

We also know, with statistical certainty, that the middle class is shrinking. That is because of policies pursued by the Conservatives and the Liberals before them for the past 25 years, policies of incessant corporate tax cuts, of shrinking government, of reducing public services, of pursuing free trade agreements and lowering tariffs and of attacking workers and the trade unions, which is one of the only forces that is serving to create and fight for good, family-sustaining, middle-class jobs with benefits.



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The government stands in the House every day and brags that it has created 600,000 jobs since the recession began, but what kind of jobs are those? We do not hear it talk about the quality of those jobs. Those jobs are temporary, in large part, they are part-time, they are low-paying, they do not have benefits and they are primarily in the service sector. Hundreds of thousands of those jobs are those types. The government cannot take the good, middle-class, family-sustaining jobs with benefits, erase them and then replace them with \$10 an hour mc jobs and call that an economic success. The government is doing exactly that.

• (1620)

Millions of people around the world are talking about the 99% of us who are no longer going to tolerate 1% owning 40% of the wealth in our country. The government should pay attention to that sentiment and start pursuing policies that reflect equitably a better share of the wealth of the country so we have an economy that works for everyone.

**Mr. Gerald Keddy (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of International Trade, for the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency and for the Atlantic Gateway, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I listened quite closely to my hon. colleague's comments and I could not help but think that the NDP had finally reverted to what that party really was, spokespeople for a few special interest groups, the big unions in our country. It is not about jobs, or opportunity, or trying to find a free trade agreement with likeminded countries around the world or fairness. It is about special interests.

If *Forbes* magazine can say that Canada is the best country in the world in which to invest, if we have created 680,000 jobs and other countries around the world have been unable to, when an economic crisis is ready to swallow up Greece and perhaps Spain and Portugal as well and when we look around by every parameter and see we have done better than other countries, how can the hon. member say what he has said?

• (1625)

**Mr. Don Davies:** Mr. Speaker, that simply is not true and the premise that New Democrats are a party of special interests is thoroughly flawed. We are a party that represents the vast majority of Canadians, the millions of hard-working middle-class and working-class families that go to work every day to try to put a paycheque on the table.

The median total family income in my riding of Vancouver Kingsway is \$51,000 a year and 40% of the families in my riding live on total family income of less than \$40,000 a year. This is a place where the average house costs \$800,000 and the average two bedroom apartment rents for \$1,200 a month.

I would ask my friend what special interests his government represents when it tables a budget that does nothing to address the housing problems faced by these people in our country? The budget does nothing to create affordable housing, child care or—

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bruce Stanton):** Questions and comments, the hon. member for Winnipeg North.

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I was somewhat enjoying the member's speech until he hit the one part where he mentioned the Conservatives and the Liberals and their corporate tax cut agenda. There is no doubt that the Liberal Party has

recognized the value of corporate tax cuts in certain situations, economic times and so forth. The Liberal Party is opposed to the tax breaks that have been given by the Conservative government in both the last budget and this budget. We have called for those tax cuts to be put on hold.

Just over a year ago I stood inside the Manitoba legislature when the NDP government gave corporate tax breaks. Would he suggest that the NDP government in Manitoba was wrong, as I would suggest, which I suggested back then? Giving corporate tax breaks to those companies in the province of Manitoba was not appropriate when the food banks were continuing to grow in the city of Winnipeg because of neglect by the NDP.

**Mr. Don Davies:** Mr. Speaker, that is the problem with trying to understand Liberal policy on anything. The Liberals are for corporate tax cuts except when they are not and it is almost impossible to determine when that is.

The Liberal government in the 1990s went through a massive slashing of federal government departments, cutting whole departments 30%, downloading costs on to the provinces, reducing health care and education transfers to the provinces and then bragging it had a balanced budget.

Many of the worst economic measures in our country were put in place by the Liberal government in the 1990s when it started a massive corporate tax cut program, which the Conservative government has continued.

The NDP in the last election promised to reduce the small business tax rate from 11% to 9% and proposed the smartest corporate tax cut policy as well, which was to give corporate tax cuts to corporations that agreed to create jobs. These two things have to be linked.

What the Liberals fail to understand is that broad-based corporate tax cuts to banks and oil companies that the Conservatives have carried on, without the creation of any jobs, is very tax inefficient and it creates tax leakage. It does not create jobs.

The NDP would give tax cuts to corporations provided they worked with us and created jobs in our country for the people who need them to raise their families.

**Mr. Terence Young (Oakville, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, on October 4, the Minister of Finance tabled the keeping Canada's economy and jobs growing act, which is integral to maintaining our country's economic strength and resilience. I am privileged to speak about this important legislation.

On May 2, Canadians gave this government a mandate to stay focused on what matters: jobs and the economy. Canadians recognized our government's strong track record with managing the country's finances in a fair and effective manner.

*Government Orders*

The budget is part of a process of government. Since 2006, each Conservative budget has built upon the success of previous budgets, with the purpose of ensuring Canada's economy is the strongest in the world. This legislation represents a continuation of previous budgets, the next phase of Canada's economic action plan.

The opposition would have Canadians believe that our government has mismanaged the global economic downturn, but the facts show the opposite is the truth. I can personally assert that the \$60 billion in targeted stimulus did indeed work by setting examples within my own riding of Oakville. Federal contributions to a waste water treatment plant, a new Oakville transit facility and a new training facility for the Operating Engineers Institute of Ontario demonstrate the effectiveness of Canada's economic action plan. These improvements have yielded hundreds of local jobs, opportunities for upward job mobility and a general improvement in the economic outlook of many of my constituents. This is just one way in which the stimulus package is working for Canadians.

Other encouraging developments have lately materialized. On October 7, Statistics Canada announced that 60,000 net new jobs were created in September across Canada, while the unemployment rate fell to 7.1%, the lowest rate of unemployment since before the recession. Canada has now created nearly 650,000 net new jobs in total since July 2009, most of which are well-paying full-time jobs. This is a remarkable feat considering the current global economic climate.

Canada's economic strength and resilience has not gone unnoticed. Allow me to highlight just some of the recognition and praise Canada has received internationally.

The International Monetary Fund has forecasted Canada will have the strongest economic growth among the G7 countries over the next two years and praised Canada's "healthy economic fundamentals".

The World Economic Forum's Global Competitiveness Report determined Canada's financial system to be the soundest in the world.

*Forbes* magazine has determined that Canada is the best place to do business, period.

Moody's has renewed Canada's triple A credit rating "due to our economic resiliency, very high government financial strength, and a low susceptibility to event risk".

Even private sector economists are singing the praises of our government's achievements. BMO Chief Economist Doug Porter stated before the House finance committee on September 27, "Canada's economic policy-making has been exemplary", while Scotiabank's Chief Economist Warren Jestin stated in the *Journal of Commerce*, "Canada is the best place to be and almost everything I look at screams that out to me".

The recognition of Canada's economic performance has a lot to do with our goal of returning to balanced budgets. I believe if families and households have to control spending in difficult times, then so should governments.

Before the global recession, our government reduced the national debt by almost \$40 billion to the lowest level in 25 years. Therefore, while other countries face serious debt challenges, our country is in a

strong fiscal position with the lowest debt to GDP ratio in the entire G7.

In 2010 we developed a three-point plan to return to balanced budgets by slowing down temporary stimulus spending in conjunction with targeted spending restraints, as well as strategically reviewing the cost to operate government. By implementing specific spending restrictions, we have identified approximately \$1.6 billion in ongoing savings already. Moreover, our government's commitment to returning to balanced budgets includes closing unfair tax loopholes.

By improving the fairness of our tax system, the government has identified \$1 billion in potential savings by 2013-14 on that part alone. More important, the government's strategic and operating review has targeted at least \$4 billion in potential savings by 2014-15. In fact, on October 13, the Canadian Press reported that our government had reduced the deficit by \$2.8 billion before the original forecast for this year, which is a 40% decline in the deficit from the \$55.6 billion deficit from the year before. Not only does this leave us in a strong fiscal position, but it gives our government leeway in determining economic policy should the global economy dip back into recession.

• (1630)

Although the forecasts and praise surrounding Canada's economy are encouraging, the global economy remains fragile. Severe economic challenges in the United States and a sovereign debt crisis in Europe could signal the onset of another global recession. It is very important that our government remain on the right path and complete the next phase of the recovery by implementing this bill.

This legislation contains important measures that will benefit families and businesses throughout the country. I would like to speak for a minute on what it means to my riding of Oakville.

Our government believes in supporting families, which is why we have included several tax credits specific to families. This includes the children's art tax credit which is a 15% non-refundable tax credit on up to \$500 in eligible fees for artistic, cultural, recreational and developmental programs for children. It is an important element in keeping children involved in the arts and will help ease some of the financial strain that is caused when parents have to pay for the various activities in which their children are involved.



We are also helping families take care of their loved ones. The family caregiver tax credit represents a 15% non-refundable tax credit on an amount of \$2,000 for caregivers of all types of infirm dependent relatives including spouses, common-law partners and minor children. Moreover, we have included the enhanced medical expenses tax credit which eliminates the \$10,000 limit on the amount of eligible medical expenses that can be claimed on behalf of a financially dependent relative. This aims to make it easier for family members to continue to care for their loved ones, something that has been called for for decades.

Helping families is what this government has been doing since 2006. Allow me to remind the House of some of the things we have done to support Canadian families since then. We have made tax cuts over 120 times since 2006. We have cut the lowest personal income tax rate to 15%. We have reduced the GST from 7% to 5%, putting nearly \$1,000 in the pockets of the average Canadian family. We have introduced the tax-free savings account, the single most important personal savings vehicle since RRSPs. Because of our government's commitment to relieving the tax burden on Canadian families we have helped a typical Canadian family save over \$3,000 a year in taxes.

Support for Canadian families does not end with tax credits. Many families in Oakville earn their livelihood by operating small businesses, which can be challenging. I know of one family in my riding where both parents own and operate small businesses: a restaurant and an interior design company. The targeted measures our government is implementing will help small businesses like theirs hire employees, avoid red tape, and purchase equipment necessary to improve productivity. One of them recently expanded the business and hired 10 new employees.

The new hiring credit for small businesses is a one-time credit of up to \$1,000 against a small firm's increase in its 2011 employment insurance premiums over those paid in 2010. This new credit will assist 525,000 employers in hiring people for their businesses. This hiring credit will help them expand their business while trying to keep their costs down.

In my many conversations with small business owners, several of them have voiced their concerns on the difficulties they have faced when dealing with government departments. The red tape reduction commission will help reduce the burden of navigating government departments. Any small business owner knows that red tape can slow down the growth of his or her business and create unnecessary stress. We are removing many of those road blocks. But it is not just red tape that is slowing down expanding businesses, it is also the costs of purchasing and upgrading machinery and equipment.

Oakville is home to a number of manufacturers, and like manufacturing companies throughout Canada, they are key engines of economic growth and jobs. Small- and medium-size manufacturers will receive help from the federal government through the extended accelerated capital cost allowance. This will help manufacturers allocate resources toward investing in manufacturing and processing equipment. Manufacturers also want to be able to sell their products abroad, and for this reason the government is simplifying customs tariffs to speed up cross-border trade with the United States.

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Our government's recognition of the enormous contribution small businesses make to our economy has been consistent since we formed government in 2006. Allow me to take a moment to remind members on the opposite side of the House what we have done for small- and medium-size businesses.

We have increased the limit on the amount of income earned by small businesses in order to be eligible for the reduced federal tax rate, otherwise known as the small business limit, to \$500,000. We have reduced the small business tax rate from 12% to 11%, not to mention the federal corporate income tax rate to 15% by 2012.

All of our government's support for small- and medium-size businesses cannot be viewed independently from our commitment to finding new markets for products and services they produce. Forty per cent of Canadian companies export their goods compared to only 1% of U.S. companies that export their goods. Simply put, we need trade to continue to grow our economy. In conjunction with this budget bill, we are pursuing mutually beneficial free trade agreements with 50 countries on top of the eight agreements we have already signed.

• (1635)

I have highlighted many ways in which the decision making of this government is helping put Canadians first, at both the national and local levels. It is clear we are leading the world by example. We will maintain our economic strength and resilience regardless of the direction the global economy may take.

[Translation]

**Mr. Marc-André Morin (Laurentides—Labelle, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I have a question for my hon. colleague across the floor.

I cannot quote *Forbes* or banks to which this government has given tax breaks, but I can quote myself. I met with forestry workers, manufacturers and mayors in the northern part of my riding, in the Mont-Laurier area. The five biggest employers were sawmills that are now closed. The local economy has been very hard hit by the forestry crisis. In the bill that has been before us for days now and is again here today, I wonder if there is anything to help the forestry industry to restructure. Is there really any plan for that? The people I met with do not see anything like that in this bill. They are trying to find ways to finance themselves and restructure their economy and they have not heard anything from this government.

• (1640)

[English]

**Mr. Terence Young:** Mr. Speaker, when we first became the government there had been a softwood lumber trade dispute that had dragged on for many years. It was finally settled by this government in a favourable position for the forestry industry. There have been many things the government has done to support the forestry industry over time.

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Recent developments in our economy are also important. This government is presenting a budget that has carefully considered the past, the present and the future conditions resulting from the recession. Previous budgets committed \$60 billion in stimulus spending to produce jobs and improve infrastructure. The plan worked. I believe the forestry industry was a beneficiary of that.

As new developments arise, we continue to stay focused on returning to balanced budgets. We are certainly not going to spend wildly. We have to be more responsible than that. We have seen the result of that in Europe. We have seen it in Greece. We are seeing it in Spain, in Ireland, in Portugal, and possibly even in Italy. For decades the people have been electing governments that have been giving them more than they can afford and the chickens have finally come home to roost. They are going through terrible restructuring in Europe and they are going to be going through very difficult times.

A similar situation is happening in the U.S. It is actually in the worst fiscal position—

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bruce Stanton):** Order. I am sorry, but other hon. members may have questions.

Questions and comments, the hon. member for Winnipeg North.

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, every member from the Conservative Party talks about the thousands of jobs that have been created. Every Conservative member has talked about that, yet the reality is that in August 2008, there were 14,631,300 Canadian full-time jobs. Today, that number is down by over 500,000 to 14,106,100.

How would the member reconcile that we are out a half million full-time jobs since the government has been in office?

**Mr. Terence Young:** Mr. Speaker, I do not know what the source is as the member did not quote the source for his numbers.

The numbers are clear that the growth that has happened since toward the end of the recession in 2008 has been 650,000 new jobs in Canada. We saw another 65,000 jobs created in September. The economy continues to grow.

Is anyone happy that they are not the best paid full-time jobs with great benefits? Of course not. We are doing everything as a government to develop all kinds of jobs, particularly those jobs. One particular way we are doing it is by growing our economy. When our largest trading partner is in economic dire straits we have to expand to other countries so we are not dependent. The Americans have been good trading partners for many years, but we are expanding trade. We are pursuing free trade agreements with 50 countries, including the European Union and India and some of the fastest growing economies in the world as well. That is how we are going to expand growth and create more jobs, even more than we have to date.

[Translation]

**Mr. José Nunez-Melo (Laval, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to rise today to oppose Bill C-13, introduced by the Minister of Finance.

This bill—a second version—is entitled the keeping Canada's economy and jobs growing act. It contains a number of amendments by replacing certain measures and is broken into 22 parts that affect

that many laws, from part 1 and the Income Tax Act, to the Customs Tariff Act, the Canada Education Savings Act, the Children's Special Allowances Act, the Canada Student Financial Assistance Act, the Employment Insurance Act, the Canadian Securities Regulation Regime Transition Office Act, the Wage Earner Protection Program Act, the Canadian Human Rights Act, the Canada Labour Code, the Conflict of Interest Act, the Canada Pension Plan, the Jobs and Economic Growth Act, the Public Servants Disclosure Protection Act, the Department of Veterans Affairs Act, the Canada Elections Act, the Special Retirement Arrangements Act and more.

To give hon. members an idea of why this bill does not make any sense, part 1 implements measures that pertain to the Income Tax Act but actually do very little. For example, part 1 forgives a portion of a guaranteed loan to doctors who work in the regions, introduces a family caregiver tax credit to assist informal caregivers, refunds employer premiums for SMEs, and extends to 2013 the temporary accelerated capital cost allowance treatment for investment.

Indeed, these are small things that will not really help to stimulate the economy and create employment. These measures are also completely insufficient. It would be better to give refundable tax credits to taxpayers or to provide direct payments to finance investments in SMEs and foster true economic growth.

Moreover, despite the Conservatives' repeated claims that 600,000 jobs have been created, we hear all sorts of news about the unemployment rate, which is currently the same as it was in 2008. In absolute terms, 1.4 million Canadians are unemployed; however, if we take into account those who have already withdrawn from the labour market because they cannot find work and those who are not considered to be looking for work because they are not receiving employment insurance benefits, there are actually 2 million unemployed Canadians.

No real stimulus plan has been proposed, save for a few small credits. Some measures are truly praiseworthy and satisfactory, as was so wonderfully stated by the member for Vancouver Kingsway. Other rather interesting measures were also mentioned by the member for Halifax.



• (1645)

Despite all the glowing references made to *Forbes* magazine by the members from other cities, economic growth is still fragile. And the International Monetary Fund, the Bank of Montreal, the TD Bank Financial Group, Scotiabank, the Conference Board of Canada, the Bank of Canada, the Toronto Board of Trade, and the Canadian Medical Association have confirmed this. Even the Minister of Finance recognizes that infrastructure investment has five times the economic impact of corporate tax cuts.

I am opposed to the bill being passed as is. I recommend that the Conservatives take another look at all of these proposals and make the necessary amendments.

• (1650)

**Mr. Hoang Mai (Brossard—La Prairie, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my colleague for his presentation and his vision. He is quite right. He said that cutting the corporate tax rate instead of investing in infrastructure was very ineffective. Even the Department of Finance says so.

Can my colleague explain whether the government should be investing in infrastructure or in helping small businesses?

**Mr. José Nunez-Melo:** Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the hon. member for Brossard—La Prairie very much. Indeed, that information comes from the Department of Finance, which says that investing in infrastructure creates jobs. Many Canadians get work and then a lot of investment follows. That is what wealth and economic growth are all about.

I could name some other departments and other sources such as the TD Bank Financial Group, which published a rather clear document suggesting ways the finance minister's advisors could improve the bill.

**Mr. Hoang Mai:** Mr. Speaker, my colleague made a very good argument for the need to invest in infrastructure. In Canada, there is a \$130 billion deficit with regard to infrastructure. The Champlain Bridge is an example. We must invest in that bridge, but there is nothing to that effect in the budget.

I would like my colleague to explain the importance of investing in infrastructure and how this can improve productivity and enhance the economy.

**Mr. José Nunez-Melo:** Mr. Speaker, I thank my hon. colleague from Brossard—La Prairie. First of all, I would like to mention the announcement that was made recently by the Conservative government's Minister of Transport, Infrastructure and Communities confirming its commitment to rebuild the Champlain Bridge. It should have been announced long before we spent so long discussing such a project.

Taking all the economic parameters into account, it has been decided that this is a viable project and that building this new infrastructure would help create jobs. These investments will benefit not only those travelling between Montreal and the south shore, but also anyone who takes this bridge to return from the U.S. and other Canadian provinces.

There are also other projects, like ports. There are many projects—whether in Halifax or Newfoundland and Labrador—in fisheries.

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Our hon. colleague from New Brunswick once proposed such a project. On the west coast of the country, Vancouver, among other large ports, also needs new port infrastructure. Almost all of this infrastructure is aging and, as we know, maintenance alone will not suffice. We really need to create effective growth.

• (1655)

[English]

**Mr. Joe Daniel (Don Valley East, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to speak today in support of Bill C-13, keeping Canada's economy and jobs growing act, as introduced by my colleague, the Minister of Finance.

Since the last federal election, I have heard a common message from constituents, business owners and community leaders alike. They have said again and again that they want our government to continue to focus on strengthening the economy and creating jobs for Canadians.

Through the economic action plan, our Conservative government delivered a record \$60 billion in investments across Canada to aid Canadians and businesses during the worst global recession since the Great Depression. Through these investments and the leadership shown by our Prime Minister, Canada has seen seven straight quarters of economic growth, one of the strongest fiscal positions among the world's top performing and advanced economies.

However, more important, Canada has seen a record of 600,000-plus jobs created since July 2009, with over 80% of them being full-time jobs. Clearly, our economic action plan is working and it is putting Canadians back into the jobs they want and need.

The good news does not stop there. On October 7, Statistics Canada further reinforced that our action plan was working. In September of this year, Canada saw employment rise by 61,000 new jobs, almost all of which were full-time jobs. This increase pushed our national unemployment rate to the lowest it has been since December 2008, down to 7.1%. These jobs were spread across a number of industries, such as education services, accommodation services, natural resources and public administration, all of which provide meaningful employment opportunities to Canadians.

The good news does not stop there. Last Friday, our good friends at Statistics Canada further reinforced that the action plan was delivering to Canadians the way our Prime Minister and ministers had envisioned. In August of this year, manufacturing sales rose by 1.4%, to \$47.6 billion, which is the highest level we have seen since October 2008.

Despite this good news, I find it ironic that the “new voice of Quebec”, as they call themselves, the official opposition, has and continues to vote against every economic measure the government makes. After all, it was Quebec that saw one of the highest increases in manufacturing sales of 3.5% to be exact, to \$11.8 billion.

*Government Orders*

For every realist in the House, we know that magnificent increase is due to the stimulus this government made in industries, such as manufacturing, as well as industries in our markets and our economy, and yet the opposition members continues to vote against our economic plan. When good news like this is released they are the first to claim how they did this or they attempt to take credit for it.

We must not be fooled. The facts are there. The economic action plan is working and we need to stay the course to ensure that we continue to lead our G7 and G20 colleagues in coming out of this economic recession. Why will the opposition not see that and join us in building a more vibrant, stronger and better economy by supporting this bill?

Our government tabled the economic action plan which has seen enhancements in a vast array of sectors: the economy, the programs and services that the Government of Canada delivers to its citizens, and the leadership our country has taken on the global financial stage. Whether it is extending programs to help businesses keep workers on the job and gainfully employed or enhancing benefits to seniors in our country, Canadians know they can count on this Conservative government to deliver for Canadians.

Supporting job creation, families, communities and investing in innovation and education will continue to be important pillars of our government's economic plan. Even with all these continued investments to help Canadians most in need, the Minister of Finance is still on track to balance Canada's budget. Is it a miracle? I think not.

● (1700)

It is clearly the result of sound fiscal management, expenditure review and proper economic management by the government, our ministers and the Prime Minister.

As stated a few moments ago, supporting job creation has been and will continue to be the top priority of our government.

From providing a one-time credit of up to \$1,000 to small businesses to encourage additional hiring to enhancing and extending successful programs such as the work-sharing program and the wage earner protection program, our Conservative government is focusing on sustaining and creating jobs across this nation while improving government services and programs so that they are delivered efficiently, effectively and affordably to Canadians.

Our great initiatives do not stop there. We have invested hundreds of millions of dollars in economic sectors that are important to our country and our economic recovery. From innovation, agriculture, energy and manufacturing to forestry and tourism, Canadian businesses know that they can count on our government to deliver the best balance to keep their doors open and business flowing, and to aid them in hiring Canadians.

That is what it is all about: building our economy to create new jobs for Canadians, young and old alike.

However, our focus has not only been on business; we are focused on two other things that are also important to Canadians: their families and their communities. That is why the government has put into law the permanent investment, annually, of \$2 billion in gas tax

funding for cities to support the infrastructure programs and projects that matter most to them.

In my riding of Don Valley East, this has enabled the City of Toronto to plan and prioritize local projects because they know they will have stable funding to better our city and our local community's infrastructure.

Building strong and more vibrant communities has been a priority of our government. In Don Valley East, I am confident to say it is evident. In addition, it was our government that introduced a new children's arts tax credit that enables parents to claim up to \$500 for programs associated with arts, culture, recreation and development. We did this because we know that a child's education and intellectual growth happens not only inside the four walls of a classroom but also in the extracurricular activities that they do in the mornings, after school or on weekends.

Just as important is what we did for the most needy seniors—over 680,000 of them, to be exact. In the budget, we took action to enhance the guaranteed income supplement to enable seniors to receive additional annual benefits of up to \$600 for single seniors and up to \$840 for couples.

Our parents and grandparents worked hard for many years to build Canada into the great nation it is today, and when it comes to keeping their money where it belongs, in their pocket, they know they can count on the Conservative government to deliver without the reckless spending that the opposition proposes.

I think one of the most important investments our government has made in Bill C-13 is the new family caregiver tax credit, which alleviates the financial burden on families who have loved ones who are not well. As someone with parents who are seniors, I find it reassuring to know that if a family member has to take care of them, the government will recognize their sacrifice by providing them with a tax credit when they have to file their returns with the government.

As we all know, families should always come first, and I believe the government and the ministers have made that clear in this budget and through all the programs and services we have created or enhanced. As a former professor at Centennial and Seneca Colleges in Toronto, I strongly support the investments in innovation, education and training that Bill C-13 makes.

After speaking with former colleagues of mine, I know they too applaud the government's investment and commitment to education, innovation and research. As we all know, education and training provide our young citizens with bright, vibrant and encompassing opportunities for their future.



• (1705)

[Translation]

**Mr. Hoang Mai (Brossard—La Prairie, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague for his presentation.

However, I do not share his enthusiasm regarding the fact that everything is fine. We hear that quite often: All is well. Things are very good.

[English]

However, we seem to forget that there is a slowdown, especially in Canada, in terms of growth. We especially seem to forget that there are 1.4 million people who are without jobs here in Canada, and if we look at people who are not looking for jobs and who are actually just out of it, we are talking about 1.7 million people. We are talking about 17.2% unemployment for youth.

Would the member explain how he can say things are going so well when right now there is a big difference between the rich and the poor, and the difference is getting bigger, as the IMF will state?

**Mr. Joe Daniel:** Mr. Speaker, if we had not taken any economic action, clearly this problem would be far bigger than it is. We have created over 650,000 new jobs, and the opportunities are growing month over month. Last month 61,000 new jobs were created, and we will be continuing to create jobs despite the slowdown that is going on.

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, over the weekend I was over at Maples Community Centre with a group of seniors. One of the discussion items was with regard to pension incomes. The feeling shared among opposition members is that we are not providing enough for our seniors and that they need to have more financial support. Surely the member recognizes that we are not providing enough financial support to our seniors.

Would he give some sort of indication as to what he believes would be a move, going forward, in terms of how we could provide an additional supplement for our seniors so that it would be easier for them to live?

**Mr. Joe Daniel:** Mr. Speaker, clearly this government has already done many things for seniors. We have actually introduced higher GIS payments. We have introduced income-splitting and a number of other measures that are already in place and helping them.

There will never be enough money for everybody, but certainly this government has done more for our seniors than almost any other government.

**Mrs. Cathy McLeod (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of National Revenue, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I look at how things were in 2008 and I look at how things are in 2011. Certainly we do have some concerns as we look at the global economy. However, we take some great comfort in terms of where Canada is and our position in the world. I can look at the riding of Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo, where the headlines today were focused on the increased shipments to China of our forestry products, and we see the mills reopening.

Perhaps I could ask the member to reflect on how things have changed in his riding over the last couple of years through economic

### *Government Orders*

action plan part one, and how phase two would actually help the constituents of his riding.

• (1710)

**Mr. Joe Daniel:** Mr. Speaker, in my riding it is clearly having a big impact. Just recently I spoke in the House about a new business that was opening up, and 40 new jobs have been created by that business in my riding. It is a great step forward. The assistance that we are giving to small businesses, which is where a lot of the jobs are being created, is having a big effect in my riding.

**Mr. Hoang Mai:** Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask the hon. member a final quick question regarding investment in infrastructure.

When the finance minister says that the benefit of investing in infrastructure is five times greater than through reducing corporate taxes, could the member explain why he still supports corporate tax cuts?

**Mr. Joe Daniel:** Mr. Speaker, regardless of the tax cuts, this government has made gas tax money to the tune of \$2 billion available to local cities and corporations to support that. That is a great investment in our infrastructure.

[Translation]

**Mr. Mathieu Ravnagat (Pontiac, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, this government keeps repeating that it has a stable majority, but it conveniently forgets that over 60% of Canadians did not vote for the Conservatives. In the Pontiac, 70% of voters did not vote for them. The government has a fundamental, even moral, responsibility to listen to the majority of Canadians and the majority of my constituents. The government must take time to listen to the Canadian public and to add some key elements to its budget.

This is even more surprising because today we need only look out the windows at the demonstrations as part of the Occupy Ottawa, Occupy Montreal and Occupy Toronto movements to see that things are not going as well as the government claims.

These demonstrations are justified because the government is doing nothing—absolutely nothing—to correct the increasingly glaring inequality in Canada. Just because Canada's economy is doing better than that of the United States or Europe, that does not mean that we are doing well, especially if we look at the facts. For example, the youth unemployment rate is increasing, not decreasing, and every time the stock market plunges, families lose an even larger chunk of their retirement savings. Furthermore, the cost of living is going up steadily, and families are struggling more and more to make ends meet. Yes, only the privileged seem to benefit from Conservative economics.

The growing gap between rich and poor in Canada is reaching crisis proportions. Between 1999 and 2007, one-third of income growth was among the richest Canadians, those with average incomes of \$400,000 or more, who represent just 1% of the population. At the same time, the IMF published a study concluding that more equitable distribution of income equates to longer and more stable periods of economic growth. This government continues to maintain its out-of-touch approach, and Canadian families must work even harder. It is time to take action to ensure that the interests of families come first.

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The entire NDP team and I are listening to Canadians and continue to work in Parliament to address the priorities of all Canadians. However, I also agree that opposing without proposing is not particularly useful. For that reason, the NDP has come up with concrete measures to address inequality in this country. Take, for example, the proposal to implement a family caregiver tax credit for those caring for an infirm dependent family member.

The family caregiver tax credit is not enough to support those who take leave to look after a sick relative. The problem with the tax credits proposed by the government is that the caregiver must have sufficient income to claim the credit. Since 65% of households with a caregiver have a combined income of less than \$45,000 and 23% have less than \$20,000, most caregivers cannot benefit from the credits proposed by the government. Changing these tax credits to a family caregiver tax credit would provide direct support that is sorely needed by most family caregivers, who cannot claim the tax credit. Many stakeholders are proposing that the government use the child disability benefit as a model. Family caregivers would receive a monthly non-taxable amount to pay for expenses incurred while caring for someone. The advantage of the credit is that it would primarily help low- and middle-income caregivers. That is a tangible solution for Canadians.

With the Conservatives in power, less than 5% of the annual budget of \$190 million for sickness and compassionate care benefits has been disbursed since 2004, helping just 6,000 Canadians.

The New Democrats also want to make the compassionate care benefits portion of the employment insurance program more flexible and generous to enable claimants to take up to six months of leave to care for dying parents, as opposed to the six weeks that are currently allowed. These are our parents. This is another concrete proposal that targets most Canadians in this situation.

If I could, I would like to continue speaking about health, since this is a very important issue in my region.

● (1715)

I would like to quote from the report of the Agence de la santé et des services sociaux de l'Outaouais:

However, it has become more difficult for the Outaouais region to maintain these hard-won gains given factors such as demographic growth and availability of workers. Current coverage of obstetric services is a striking example. Nevertheless, these issues, which affect basic services, must be analyzed as temporary situations, and the agency must provide sustainable solutions for the region.

The reality that this government does not seem to want to address or even recognize—as though hiding its head in the sand were a viable option—is that 5 million Canadians do not even have access to a family doctor and 73% of Canadians without a family doctor rely on emergency rooms or walk-in clinics for front-line medical care. In a country where universal health care is recognized as a fundamental principle, this is shameful.

Now, because of this situation, Canada ranks 26th out of 30 industrialized countries. The Conservatives like to say that Canada is in first place but, when it comes to health care, Canada is in 26th place because of this government.

Let us now turn to jobs. The Conservatives claim that the measures in their budget will stimulate the economy and create jobs,

but we know that the same measures were used in the United States without success. In Texas, where the right reigns, the Republican government is doing the opposite of this government.

It is true that job creation is fundamental. The Outaouais, my region, lost 6,200 jobs in 2009, making it the region the second-most affected by job loss in Quebec. In the forestry sector, in October 2008, the Smurfit-Stone company lost nearly 600 jobs, as well as indirect jobs involving transporting wood and all the rest. That same year, Maibec, White Birch Paper and AbitibiBowater had to cut jobs. Again, there is nothing in this budget to help this industry in crisis in Quebec and its workers.

On the contrary, the government is investing even more in the major oil companies and giving tax cuts to the wealthiest. What is the government doing to help Quebec's forestry workers? The answer is simple: not enough.

The Outaouais region has a split personality. In Gatineau and the Collines-de-l'Outaouais, the labour force participation rate is on the rise and is one of the best in Quebec. In the City of Gatineau, the average income is \$52,000, which is not bad. However, when you leave the city, in the Vallée-de-la-Gatineau regional municipality, the average income is only \$32,395. In the Pontiac, it is only \$33,859. This difference is attributed to the proximity of the public service to the first two municipalities. According to Service Canada, no growth in the forestry sector is expected between 2010 and 2012.

Add all that to the significant cuts planned for the public service, and one has to wonder if the two municipalities that have been spared thus far will experience the same kind of job losses. Government cuts and investments do not take urban or rural factors into consideration, nor do they take into account this country's industries in crisis. Basically, this plan is not in tune with the daily reality Canadians are facing. If that were the case, it would take a more serious stance on this country's growing unemployment rate. Today, approximately 1.4 million Canadians are officially unemployed. If we include discouraged and underemployed workers, that number rises to nearly 2 million. The unemployment rate has risen to 7.3%, and the proportion of part-time workers and those looking for full-time work has increased very rapidly.

High-quality, full-time jobs that can support families—not just the insecure jobs that the government constantly brags about having created—are very difficult to find in many regions of the country, particularly my region.

● (1720)

My party's position is clear. The NDP is determined to put the priorities of Canadian families first. This involves immediately passing measures to improve health care, stimulate job creation and guarantee stable retirement.



*Government Orders**[English]*

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, the member made reference on two occasions to health care. I agree in terms of the importance of that universal health care to which he makes reference. I would go further in just how important it is that we start to talk more about the health care accord that we hope will be put into place by 2014.

What is his party's position in regard to the ability to use the Canada Health Act to ensure we have basic standards of health care delivery that are relatively equal from coast to coast, as opposed to just giving tax points or money for health care transfers? Would he support the important role that we, as a legislature, have to ensure that there is good quality health care and that there is accountability for those dollars that are spent?

*[Translation]*

**Mr. Mathieu Ravignat:** Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for his question. I am happy that my colleague is interested in this issue that is important to me and my riding.

My answer is yes. Essentially, the NDP believes that the principle of universality is fundamental. However, we must also respect provincial jurisdictions. The reality is that larger investments, especially for hiring doctors and nurses, are essential to help this country move forward.

*[English]*

**Mrs. Cathy McLeod (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of National Revenue, CPC):** Madam Speaker, my ears perked up at the conversation around health care.

We were all back in our ridings this last week. As I travelled into my rural communities, my constituents were looking at the movement we made in terms of forgiving loans for students as being very positive and they were starting to see very positive results.

They talked about the 6% that we would maintain on transfers. There are many positive things happening in health care.

Would the member perhaps like to reflect on really provincial jurisdiction as being very important to respect, but also how important these movements are to ensure physicians are available and health transfers continue to be protected?

*[Translation]*

**Mr. Mathieu Ravignat:** Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for her question.

Like her, I represent a rural riding. The comments I have heard from my constituents are that the government's measures make certain things possible. She spoke in English, so my thoughts are in English.

● (1725)

*[English]*

Loan forgiveness is not enough to create incentives for doctors and nurses to stay in rural areas. It is not as easy as saying that we will forgive a loan.

There are a lot of reasons why people leave rural areas and why young people in particular leave rural areas. The member should know it as well as I do. It has to do with devitalization of the area or crisis in certain industries.

There is a need for greater incentives to keep trained doctors and nurses in rural areas. One solution is to actually train them in the area they were born.

*[Translation]*

**Mr. Hoang Mai (Brossard—La Prairie, NDP):** Madam Speaker, I congratulate my colleague on his excellent speech.

He spoke about what is going on with Occupy Wall Street and the movement that is now sweeping across Canada: Occupy Halifax, Occupy Montreal and Occupy Toronto, for example. The gap between the rich and the poor is widening.

I would like my colleague to tell me what the current budget proposes or what the government is doing to close the gap between the rich and the poor.

**The Deputy Speaker:** The hon. member for Pontiac has 30 seconds to respond.

**Mr. Mathieu Ravignat:** Madam Speaker, I thank my hon. colleague for his question.

The answer is very simple: very little. Furthermore, it will basically only create further inequality. This budget does not present any solutions.

**Mr. John Weston (West Vancouver—Sunshine Coast—Sea to Sky Country, CPC):** Madam Speaker, it really is an honour for me to rise here today to speak to the budget implementation act.

*[English]*

We have heard some excellent speeches today about the government's commitment to the well-being of Canadians in the context of the bill.

Three themes come through loud and clear as we look at the bill. First, our government, especially the Minister of Finance and the Prime Minister, have listened to Canadians. Second, hearing what Canadians want, our government has committed to put money back in their pockets, to promote jobs and economic growth. Third, our government proposes to lay the foundation for all Canadians to become stronger, healthier and better off.

We Canadians enjoy one of the most stable and strongest democracies in the world, a democracy where our people care and a democracy where our leaders listen. The government has consulted extensively across the country. In fact, on January 12, 2009, the Minister of Finance and I arranged for him to consult at our very own Park Royal consumer centre in West Vancouver, part of the riding I so proudly represent. Over 400 people came, some from great distances from across the Lower Mainland of Vancouver, to lend the minister their perspectives for our federal budget. The minister was welcomed with a standing ovation. Members of my community and local leaders have in recent months, and over the past three years, shared with me what they believe should be included in the government's low tax plan for jobs and growth.

*Government Orders*

The Minister of Finance, my team and I have spoken to a large and diverse range of community groups, local municipalities, first nations, heads of cultural demographic and interest groups. Together we have identified for each group three priorities and three events that most matter to them. The Prime Minister, the Minister of Finance and our government have listened.

The economic action plan, the low tax plan for jobs and growth, responds directly to what Canadians across the country want. A big part of that is putting money back into the pockets of Canadians. Our government proposes to put money back into their pockets by better supporting families, balancing tax measures and by improving infrastructure, the Canadian business environment and Canada's focus on clean energy.

As a government that stands up for families, I am pleased to see the introduction of the family caregiver tax credit for caregivers of infirm dependent relatives. This will enable other Canadian families to care for elderly mothers and fathers in the way our family did. I have seen the benefit to families first hand of enabling them to care for frail or sick dependents at home. In my own case, our family was able to work closely with hospital workers, especially palliative care nurses, occupational health nurses and others to enable us to care for my mother until she passed away in May, 2008. Her quality of life was the best it could be, surrounded by her son, her grandchildren and even the family dog for as long as possible.

Do not just take my word for it. The Canadian Caregiver Coalition has said:

The measures announced in the budget are an important acknowledgement of the vital role of family caregivers. The announcement of a Family Caregiver Tax Credit demonstrates the federal government's commitment to families and the caregiving responsibilities that they assume.

Another major way the government proposes to support families is in repealing mandatory retirement regulations. As the Canadian Taxpayers Federation notes, "People have a right to determine how long they work, and this is a major step towards eliminating poverty for seniors".

Charitable organizations in Canada are also world leaders. They encourage people to volunteer their time and money to help the needy in Canada and abroad. I have been warmed and inspired by the strength of the volunteer spirit I see demonstrated in Powell River, the Sunshine Coast, Bowen Island, West Vancouver and North Vancouver, Squamish and Whistler, where I met with constituents over recent weeks in my ride the riding bicycle tour of the majestic riding that I represent.

Many people in the North Shore support Food for the Hungry, for instance, an organization that delivers food and services to needy people overseas. It is an organization I had the honour to chair before becoming an MP. Another great organization in our riding is Linwood House, which assists marginalized women in the downtown east side. Organizations like these will also benefit from the bill, as it strengthens the tax base for charitable donations.

Finally, the government proposes to put money back into Canadian's pockets by investing in clean energy, infrastructure and business. One of the many areas in which people in my riding lead the world is in clean energy. We have seen jobs created and the economy stimulated through independent power projects in many

areas of the riding I represent, in Powell River, Squamish, and elsewhere. Steve Davis is one individual, a resident of West Vancouver, who has done much to promote clean energy generation.

● (1730)

A company in the same field, formerly known as Plutonic Power now Alterra Power Corp., has blazed environmentally friendly trails in the Powell River area, creating jobs for aboriginals and other people. So Canadians will be glad to hear that this budget implementation act extends eligibility for the accelerated capital cost allowance for clean energy generation and conservation equipment.

Our government also proposes to invest in infrastructure. While our government now strives for deficit and debt control, we are mindful of the need we are fulfilling with infrastructure improvements. Part 9 of the bill provides for payments to provinces, territories and municipalities, first nations and other entities for municipal infrastructure improvements. In late March of this year the Federation of Canadian Municipalities noted that budget 2011 delivered a vital commitment to cities and communities to develop a new long-term federal infrastructure plan. We will keep this momentum going.

Our government also proposes to invest in Canadian industry. Many captains of the mining industry reside in the riding I represent, like Ian Telfer and Robert Gallagher. Also in our riding is the B.C. Museum of Mining, an excellent institution that not only preserves the history of our province's pioneers but also helps people understand the importance of the mining industry to jobs and prosperity in B.C. today. I am therefore proud to say that this bill would extend eligibility for the mineral exploration tax credit by one year to flow-through share agreements entered into before March 31, 2012. This is an important way that our government proposes to invest in Canadian industry.

Our government has listened to Canadians, and in response proposes to put money back into their pockets by supporting families, by balancing tax measures, and by investing in clean energy, infrastructure and industry. I dare say our government has listened well and made some very fine proposals.

Finally, besides telling our government to put money back into their pockets, Canadians have told us to lay the foundations for our continued security, health and well-being.

That is why the bill introduces a volunteer firefighters tax credit to allow eligible volunteer firefighters to claim a 15% non-refundable tax credit up to \$3,000.



One of the most valiant persons one will meet in Canadian communities is the volunteer firefighter. I have worked with career and volunteer firefighters in the riding I represent to ensure that, to the best of our ability, our government is supporting them.

In direct response to a meeting held in the Lions Bay part of my riding with volunteer firefighters led by Fire Chief Andrew Oliver, I wrote the Minister of Finance requesting that a volunteer firefighter's tax credit be created and along with many other Canadians calling for that tax credit. We found it in this budget and we are happy. The Canadian Association of Fire Chiefs has said that it strongly applauds the Conservative government's introduction of a \$3,000 credit. How happy Canadians are that our Minister of Finance, known as the greatest in the world, wisely recognized these heroes and provided for our continued security in this budget implementation bill.

Our government proposes to support our continued well-being by investing further in Canadians. In our ridings we have an enormous number of artists, musicians, sculptors and others who promote Canadian culture with their every word and deed. Names like Sarah McLachlan, Randy Bachman, Joni Mitchell, Shari Ulrich and Michael Tickner are just a handful of names of such groundbreaking cultural icons.

What a great breakthrough for our Conservative government to introduce the children's arts tax credit up to \$500 per child for eligible fees associated with children's artistic, cultural, recreational and developmental activities. We cannot wait to see the next generation of artists develop, partly in response to this initiative.

This bill would accomplish what Canadians asked us to do, to provide for their continued security, health and well-being. On behalf of the innovative, hard-working and entrepreneurial people of the riding I represent, and on behalf of all Canadians, I am proud to support this bill, our government and our great country.

● (1735)

**Mr. Scott Simms (Bonaville—Gander—Grand Falls—Windor, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, I want to go back to the tax credit for caregivers and the tax credit for volunteer firefighters. This is an issue we have discussed quite a bit. By talking about the caregiver element of it, we can actually get to the nub of the issue by saying that if someone is providing a healthy amount of caregiving in his or her home, that is less time for the individual in the workplace.

My question surrounds this. There are two types of tax credits here to consider. There is one that is refundable and one that is non-refundable. An individual would get the non-refundable tax credit but that credit is income tested. A person must make above a certain amount of income to get the full realization of that benefit. If it is a refundable tax credit, an individual can receive the full amount. So if someone does not make any money, that person can still receive a cheque or refundable tax credit for the services provided. That goes just as well for volunteer firefighters but it is particularly acute for caregivers.

I am wondering why this is a particular non-refundable tax credit. Should it not be a refundable tax credit for the vulnerable?

**Mr. John Weston:** Madam Speaker, there is a saying that no good deed goes unpunished and I suppose that one could welcome great

compliments for a tax credit that would encourage people to be liberated from their work at home and that would help families take care of an infirm person. One might therefore expect that members across the House would not only support that measure but support the act as they vote this evening, and I hope they will. However, sometimes there is a tendency in public life for us to look at the glass as being half empty rather than half full and to say that it was a good thing but wonder why we did not do an even better thing.

As our government tries to control deficits and debts, we will be looking at these tax credits and other measures that would encourage Canadians to do the right thing to strengthen families, but we are also ensuring that what we can do is sustainable for the mid-term and the long-term.

**Hon. Steven Fletcher (Minister of State (Transport), CPC):** Madam Speaker, as I was listening to the member, I had the opportunity to also look at the summary that is outlined in Bill C-13. I would like the member to respond a bit more about the tax credit advantages.

In the summary we talk about the tax credit for children in artistic, cultural and recreational programs. We talk about tax credits for students in post-secondary education. There are different tax credits or treatment for accelerated capital cost allowance, treatment for investments in machinery and equipment, and in the mining sector.

Could the member explain a bit more about the benefit of these tax advantages and how they empower Canadians and job creators in making our economy stronger?

● (1740)

**Mr. John Weston:** Madam Speaker, the tax credits would be a specific inducement to get people to do the right thing. We as a party and government consulted widely across the country. As the Minister of State knows, as he was directly involved in those consultations, Canadians asked us to do certain things. Canadians asked us to make it easier, for instance, for someone to stay at home and care for an infirm relative.

Canadians said that they liked what we had done with the sports tax credit in the previous budget. They asked that the Prime Minister or Minister of Finance provide a similar inducement on the arts side. What about volunteer firefighters, these incredibly gallant people, supported by everyone in this House? What could we do to make it easier for them to do what they do, which is get up in the middle of the night? They are not paid, but perhaps if they could receive a tax credit then that would at least acknowledge the enormous benefit they confer upon all Canadians.

Our government listened and it brought in these specific tax credits which would have great results.

*Government Orders*

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, the clock is ticking as the vote is quickly approaching. I have been a parliamentarian for about 20 years now and never before have I seen a government take such strong action to prevent members in a chamber from being able to participate fully in what is one of the most important bills that we will debate in the House. This is a bill that allows us to talk about our priorities, what it is we would like to see, and where we could make a difference. I look at this bill as one of the major pieces of legislation that needs to be debated.

We have to remember that this is a thick bill. I am not sure exactly how many pages are in the bill itself as I do not have it in front of me, but it is a thick bill. The government brought it forward for second reading and then a couple of hours later brought in time allocation. By bringing in time allocation, it has limited the ability of the chamber to have appropriate debate and discussion, questions and answers on one of the most important bills we will deal with in any given session.

This is a change in attitude by the government and it is because it has a majority now. It feels it can do whatever it wants. There is an issue that is very important to me, in fact I would suggest is important to all Canadians, but has a very significant impact in the Prairies, and that is the Canadian Wheat Board. The reason I bring it up at this point in my comments is because it is a reflection of the attitude of the government. As I say, we have a government that brought in time allocation within hours of bringing the bill forward. Then we have the Canadian Wheat Board issue.

The government is obligated in law to bring forward a plebiscite when it makes any sorts of changes to the degree it is proposing to make. It has an obligation to do that and it has chosen not to do it. The Canadian Wheat Board itself took on the responsibility that the government had and conducted a plebiscite. In that plebiscite there were tens of thousands of prairie grain and barley farmers who voted and sent a very clear message to the government. The message was very clear. It was to keep the Canadian Wheat Board. They do not want the government to get rid of the Canadian Wheat Board. It is about as clear as it can get.

I raised the issue in question period and questioned the Prime Minister and I heard the Prime Minister's response to the plebiscite and to the prairie farmers who took the time to vote, the prairie farmers he claims to represent. His response to the plebiscite is that it does not count, it does not mean anything. In fact, he went out of his way to discredit the way in which that plebiscite was conducted. He does not like the results.

The other day we heard the Prime Minister say that it does not really matter what prairie farmers want, that the government is getting rid of the Canadian Wheat Board whether they like it or not. I am going to suggest that attitude is going to hurt the government. It is going to hurt the government because a majority of prairie wheat farmers, and we are talking well over 20,000 farmers, did not want the government to get rid of the CWB. Its actions to date have been disgraceful. To completely ignore what it is that Canadians and prairie farmers—

• (1745)

**Mr. Stephen Woodworth:** Madam Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I must admit that as my friend across the way was going on I

drifted in and out of attention to what he said. However, it seems to me that we are here today to debate the budget implementation act and what he is talking about is totally irrelevant to it. I would ask you, Madam Speaker, to ask the member across the way to maintain relevance to the debate at hand and stop his comments on irrelevant matters such as the Wheat Board.

**The Deputy Speaker:** I will give some latitude to the member to come back to the bill at hand.

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux:** Madam Speaker, I know the member opposite does not like what he is hearing but I can assure the member that it is completely relevant to the debate. Had he been listening in terms of the comments and looking at the book, and I can appreciate it is a fairly thick book, he would find that there are many expenditures that deal with our agricultural community. The actions of the government and the profound impact that it would have on the Prairie farmer is worthy of debating today. I suggest that in time the government will regret taking the actions that it has decided to take on the Prairie farmers.

The title of Bill C-13 is “keeping Canada's economy and jobs growing act”. I have had the opportunity to question members and one of the things I raise constantly is the fact that back in August 2008 there were actually 14,631,300 jobs. Today, there are 14,106,100 jobs. We all know that statistics can be used for all sorts of arguments but the point I am trying to get at is that over the years we have lost half a million full-time jobs.

Let there be no doubt that the biggest concerns Canadians have today is the economy and the need for jobs. I believe that this budget document could have done a lot more in terms of being able to create the jobs that Canadians want to see. With a little more imagination, we could have seen a budget that was fairer and that could have generated the type of jobs that Canadians believe government has a role to play in terms of providing the necessary incentives to have an impact on providing those jobs.

In fact, one of the questions I posed to one of my New Democrat colleagues was on the whole issue of housing. It is an area in which I believe the government could do so much more in terms of providing more incentives to improve our housing stock and so forth.

With so little time to speak, I want to pick up on a couple of other very important issues.

The health care accord is something that is of critical importance. Having been in a provincial legislature for a number of years, I can say that the greatest challenge a province has is that percentage of the budget, the need to deal with it, the need to provide funding and the need to look at future federal budgets. The federal government has a role to play in ensuring that there is a basic standard of health care services from coast to coast to coast. However, there is concern in terms of the government not taking the necessary action to make a difference.



I have raised the issue of seniors. Far too many seniors in Winnipeg North and everywhere else in our country are having a difficult time meeting their basic economic requirements. We need to do more to provide that support to our seniors. I would have liked to have seen more going toward senior pensions and the guaranteed annual income portion of it.

• (1750)

**Hon. Steven Fletcher (Minister of State (Transport), CPC):** Madam Speaker, I listened with interest to the member for Winnipeg North. I would note that the party that formed government previously cut \$25 billion from the provinces, which caused a great deal of problems.

I would also note that his party voted against many initiatives that benefit that member's riding, be it the F-35 contract, or the money for the human rights museum, or any of the great initiatives this government has undertaken that benefit Manitoba, including significant transfer payments.

The member should also reflect on the fact that his party did not win a single seat in the rural areas of the Prairies. In fact, I understand that his party did not win a single poll in rural parts of the Prairies. I think that indicates that the Conservative Party reflects Prairie values, Canadian values.

Why will the member not just come to this side of the House and support the Conservatives and the people of Canada?

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux:** Madam Speaker, I can indicate to the House that the human rights museum is a wonderful project that I supported. When billions of dollars are spent, a lot of what is spent is fairly favourable toward good ideas and good projects. I do support those.

However, at the end of the day, there are some outstanding issues that are fairly significant. The member is right. In Manitoba we have 1 of the 14 seats but there was a time when we had 12 of the 14 seats. When the government takes a position, such as it has on the Canadian Wheat Board, I foresee a time in the future when we might be able to get back 12 of the 14 seats.

I would give it more of a cautionary note that the government might want to tread somewhat carefully in the current direction it is going.

**Mr. Alex Atamanenko (British Columbia Southern Interior, NDP):** Madam Speaker, perhaps my hon. colleague could shed a bit of light on the following. We have a government that has presented a budget, that is supposedly fiscally responsible and understands the situation, and yet by destroying the capacity of the Canadian Wheat Board to negotiate on behalf of farmers around this world and not having a feasibility study or anything on paper to show what will happen, does the member not think that this may not be quite the right direction in which we should be going?

• (1755)

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux:** Madam Speaker, when individuals from the agricultural stakeholders in the United States are saying that this is a good thing, and when a majority of our Prairie wheat farmers are saying that they want to keep the Wheat Board, that should be sending up quite a few red flags.

### *Government Orders*

Let there be no doubt that there has been very little, if any, statistical or factual research that the government has been able to do on this issue that clearly enunciates why it is a good policy decision. The reason is that it is a bad decision. The reason that the government is moving in this direction is more so because of a philosophical, ideological twist that the current Prime Minister has. I do not know why he is so passionately against the Wheat Board. It just does not make any sense, and a vast majority of Canadian Prairie wheat farmers have recognized it and that is the reason they voted the way they did in the plebiscite.

**Mr. James Rajotte (Edmonton—Leduc, CPC):** Madam Speaker, I appreciate the opportunity to speak to Bill C-13. I enjoyed the last speech and the questions and comments. The very short answer to that is my relatives who live in Wainwright, Alberta should have the same rights that my relatives who live in Lucan, Ontario currently have, which is choice in terms of how they market their grains. Rights should extend across the country.

**Mr. Gerald Keddy:** We're not getting rid of the Wheat Board.

**Mr. James Rajotte:** That is exactly right. We are not getting rid of the Wheat Board. We are allowing marketing choice.

I also want to respond to some of the comments made about the job creation numbers. I encourage people if they question figures that parliamentarians may be using on both sides, to go to the Statistics Canada website and read it. The October 7 release says that following two months, employment rose by 61,000 in September, all full-time employment. This increase pushed the unemployment rate down to 7.1%, the lowest rate since December 2008. It is also dramatically lower than the unemployment rate of the United States, which has been a reversal over the last two to three decades and has occurred under our government. As the Minister of State for Finance has said today, one person who is looking for work and is unemployed is too many and that is why we are continuing to work and introduced this budget implementation act.

For people following the debate, we introduced the first budget in March. The election occurred so we reintroduced the budget in June. However, following a budget there are typically two implementation acts that take all of the measures in the budget and puts them into legislation. We had the first implementation act in June, which passed Parliament, and now we are debating the second budget implementation act.

I will read some of the highlights of the bill which introduces the family caregiver tax credit, the children's arts tax credits making it eligible for artistic, cultural, recreational development activities, the volunteer firefighters tax credit. It removes the \$10,000 limit on eligible expenses that can be claimed under the medical expense tax credit.

### *Government Orders*

There are many other things including the accelerated capital cost allowance, which I will speak about at length later. Qualifying environmental trusts for the Canadian pipeline sector is something that many of us from Alberta have worked on. This ensures that those in the pipeline sector set aside some money to ensure the land is returned to the condition it was in before when the pipeline is removed. I know the member for Calgary Centre has worked very hard on that initiative as well.

There are measures in terms of RRSPs.

The bill also proposes to amend the Canada Student Loans Act to authorize the minister to forgive portions of family physicians, nurses and nurse practitioners, guaranteed student loans if they begin in underserved rural or remote communities.

It also proposes to amend the Employment Insurance Act to provide a temporary measure to refund a portion of employer premiums for small business. This is the hiring credit and something the member who spoke previously should be very interested in and should support. This measure was proposed by the Canadian Federation of Independent Business to assist small businesses in hiring more Canadians, because they are the primary employers of Canadians.

The bill also proposes to amend the Wage Earner Protection Program Act to extend in certain circumstances a period during which wages earned by individuals but not paid to them by their employers who are bankrupt or subject to receivership may be the subject of a payment under that act. That is certainly a good measure and I encourage parliamentarians to look at that seriously.

Another measure is the amending of the Canadian Human Rights Act to repeal certain provisions that provide for mandatory retirement. This is another very good initiative in this legislation. That is why I am standing strongly in support of the bill.

I want to talk at length about the extension of the accelerated capital cost allowance treatment for investments and machinery and equipment in the manufacturing and processing sector for an additional two years. This was a recommendation that came from our industry committee. In 2006 the Canadian Manufacturers and Exporters and others even in the labour movement came forward at committee and said that manufacturing was facing some very severe challenges. They said that they were facing a dollar that had rapidly appreciated in a short period of time. They were also facing some energy costs and challenges from emerging economies such as China. They wanted Parliament to look at ways in which we could address these challenges. It was a very co-operative and collaborative approach. The committee studied it through 2006. I would commend members of all parties for their work in that area.

● (1800)

The report was tabled in Parliament in 2007.

In March 2007, the Minister of Finance, to his credit, took the first recommendation we made, which was the extension of the accelerated capital cost allowance for two years, and put that in the 2007 budget. Now it is being extended for another two years in this budget. Essentially this would allow companies across the country to invest in their machinery and equipment.

I would encourage members of all parties to go to manufacturers in their own ridings or across the country and ask the plant managers or the CFOs as to how this has impacted them directly. When I did a walk-through with a manufacturer in Edmonton, he pointed to specific pieces of equipment and said, "This piece of equipment cost \$1 million. This one cost \$1 million. Because of the accelerated capital cost allowance which allows us to write it off at a faster pace, we can afford it. If that was not in place, we could not afford it."

It allows that company to be more productive. In fact, from an environmental perspective, it is using the most up-to-date technology. That means it is more environmentally efficient as well.

This is one of the reasons the committee obviously supported this in 2007 and it is the reason the government is continuing to extend this type of accelerated capital cost allowance.

Again, I would encourage members to talk to manufacturers in their own area as to whether they do support this measure or not.

I will point to a couple more companies.

Argus Machine in Nisku in my riding was very straightforward with us. I think the member for Westlock—St. Paul was with me when we visited that facility. Representatives of that company said there are some very specific things our government has done to assist them, such as the accelerated capital cost allowance and the work-share program. In the work-share program the government covered part of the cost of an employee and the company covered the other part. This enabled companies to retain employees through the downturn. One of the biggest challenges, in fact, perhaps the biggest challenge in an area like mine, in Alberta, is ensuring there are enough workers, both skilled and unskilled, who can satisfy that labour need. In fact, this allowed companies to retain those people for when their orders picked up, and they did not lose them to another company, or a company in another part of the country or, in fact, a company in another country. It enabled them to retain them.

The other thing they pointed to was the investments our government has made in things like the industrial research assistance program, which especially assists small- and medium-size enterprises, if they want to make some innovative investments.

Another thing that the IRAP does is it provides good mentorship to businesses, especially businesses in our area, that have gone from \$1 million to \$7 million in sales. It provides very good mentorship to companies that are expanding in that way.

Another program they point to is the SR&ED program, the scientific research and experimental development program. As parliamentarians know, we received the report today. We were very thankful for the input in that report because it is a very generous program. It is one that works generally very well, but there certainly could be improvements. I would like to thank them for their work in that area.



In terms of the accelerated capital cost allowance, I would like to quote from the March 22 press release by the Canadian Manufacturers & Exporters:

The extension of the two-year write-off for investments in manufacturing and processing technologies announced in...budget [2011] is critical to sustaining Canada's economic recovery.... "In an era of economic uncertainty, this tax measure gives manufacturers the confidence to invest in their future by boosting purchases of productivity-enhancing technologies"....

Another area I would like to turn to is loan forgiveness, especially as it pertains to rural areas, on portions of student loans to family physicians, nurses and nurse practitioners if they begin to work in underserved rural or remote communities. The Canadian Medical Association stated:

The initiative to address the shortage of primary care physicians recognizes the particular challenges of providing health care in rural and remote areas of the country.

It is important to point to these specific initiatives because a lot of rhetoric flows when a budget is introduced. However, these are the specific measures that are in this budget implementation bill that members on the other side of the House should think very carefully about before they vote yea or nay to this measure.

• (1805)

Another initiative I want to point to is the extension by one year of the mineral exploration tax credit for flow-through share investors to support Canada's mining sector.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Order. Perhaps the hon. member could elaborate during questions and comments. Questions and comments, the hon. member for Drummond.

[Translation]

**Mr. François Choquette (Drummond, NDP):** Madam Speaker, I would first like to congratulate the hon. member from Edmonton—Leduc on his speech.

He talked about several measures to create jobs and get the economy moving; on the other hand, he did not talk about the environment. Yet the environment is very important to getting the economy moving, because it could be very costly in the long run. In a report released on September 29, 2011, the National Round Table on the Environment and the Economy reported that climate change could cost Canada \$21 billion per year by 2050. So this is where investments are needed—in the environment, in renewable energy sources, green energy, innovation and so on—in order to improve the Conservatives government's record. For now, this budget does not cut it.

Should we not be investing in the environment, rather than in small measures that do not seem to make any difference right now?

[English]

**Mr. James Rajotte:** Madam Speaker, the hon. member raised environmental issues, but as he knows, the budget did in fact make some investments in the environment.

If he is looking at this specific piece of legislation, the accelerated capital cost allowance which I mentioned, investments in new machinery, makes a specific company more environmentally efficient.

Further to that, this piece of legislation expands eligibility for the accelerated capital cost allowance for clean energy generation and

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conservation equipment. I encourage him to look at that specific part. I also encourage him to look at the expansion of the eligibility rules for qualifying environmental trusts.

There are very specific measures in this bill that address environmental concerns he may have. That is why I encourage members on the opposite side of the House to think very carefully about the measures in the budget before they vote yea or nay to this measure. The environmental spending was in the first budget implementation act that was passed in June, but these specific measures that address some of the environmental concerns are in this budget implementation bill which we will be voting on very shortly.

**Mr. Scott Simms (Bonaville—Gander—Grand Falls—Windsor, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, I want to congratulate my colleague on his speech, but I also want to discuss the retention of work that he talked about, and some of the measures that are in the bill to help retain the workers.

I appreciate his comments on the capital cost allowance and other smaller measures. There is one measure, however, that is not directly addressed but is of great benefit to areas of higher unemployment, which is the current pilot projects that are in existence for employment insurance.

In one case in particular, by way of illustration, it allows people to rely on the best 14 weeks of work in order to achieve that benefit, whereas before this pilot project, it was the last 14 weeks. Without the pilot project there is a disincentive to go after shorter weeks, as we call them.

I would like him to comment on that. Should these pilot projects be a permanent feature of the Employment Insurance Act?

• (1810)

**Mr. James Rajotte:** Madam Speaker, as the member pointed out, the pilot was extended in some fashion. He may disagree with the specific way in which it was extended, but it was extended to the best 14 weeks.

I would also point to the extension of the work-share program which did allow companies to retain a lot of the employees they had, especially during the downturn.

I also point to the hiring credit which was very strongly endorsed and recommended by the Canadian Federation of Independent Business as the strongest measure that we could make at this time to enable small- and medium-size businesses to hire new employees.

If the member is concerned about job creation, the job creation numbers, as I mentioned at the outset of my speech, from Statistics Canada itself are fantastic when we compare them to those of other nations in the G7 and the OECD, in part because of things like the work-share program, the best 14 weeks, the sharing credit through EI.

I encourage the member opposite to look very carefully at these measures that are included in this budget implementation bill.

[Translation]

**The Deputy Speaker:** I must inform the hon. member for Drummond that he may begin his presentation, but that I shall interrupt him at 6:15 p.m.

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**Mr. François Choquette (Drummond, NDP):** Madam Speaker, it is unfortunate that I will not be able to give my entire speech. Nevertheless, I will begin my speech on Bill C-13.

This bill would give large tax breaks to very large business without setting any conditions. What a mistake. Not only are these tax cuts not contingent on the creation of new jobs but they also do not put Canada on the right track for the future, that is the green track, the environmental track.

I will explain why this legislation is but a drop in the bucket in terms of the challenges we will face in coming years. And they will be significant challenges.

First, as I mentioned, the legislation will not create any jobs—and we need jobs. We must continue to create jobs because there are still too many people left behind in Canada and in my lovely region of Drummond. The huge gap between the rich and the rest of the population continues to grow. The vast movement of global occupation and protest make us realize that Canadian families, and those of Drummond as well, are feeling a tremendous amount of pressure. I recently noticed that relief agencies, such as the Comptoir alimentaire Drummond, are being used by more people, which worries me a great deal.

In this respect, let us look at the numbers and statistics that prove that the Conservative government is missing the mark when it comes to job creation.

The number of Canadians who are officially unemployed is still approximately 1.4 million. In addition, if we include those who are discouraged or underemployed, the number is close to 2 million.

So, we would expect serious and concrete job creation measures. For example, the Conservatives could draw on our excellent election platform in which we proposed the introduction of a job creation tax credit of up to \$4,500 for each new job created. This initiative would help to create 200,000 jobs per year, jobs that would meet the needs of families.

We also have other proposals that hon. members can find in our election platform. Unfortunately, I do not have time to share those proposals with them. These are concrete measures to reward businesses that create jobs, not just gifts for very large corporations, banks or the oil and gas industries. No. These are real measures that would benefit families in Canada and in my riding, Drummond. They are real measures that would create good-quality jobs for the future.

Speaking of the oil and gas industries, does the Conservative government really believe that these are the industries of the future? No, they are not. And it is not true that oil sands are an ethical oil source, that is for sure. Give me a break.

In my riding, people have joined forces. I have to stop there? Okay.

● (1815)

[English]

**The Deputy Speaker:** It being 6:15 p.m., pursuant to order made on Thursday, October 6, 2011, it is my duty to interrupt the

proceedings and put forthwith every question necessary to dispose of the second reading stage of the bill now before the House.

The question is on the motion. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**Some hon. members:** No.

**The Deputy Speaker:** All those in favour of the motion will please say yea.

**Some hon. members:** Yea.

**The Deputy Speaker:** All those opposed will please say nay.

**Some hon. members:** Nay.

**The Deputy Speaker:** In my opinion the yeas have it.

*And five or more members having risen:*

**The Deputy Speaker:** Call in the members.

● (1840)

(The House divided on the motion, which was agreed to on the following division:)

(Division No. 39)

## YEAS

## Members

Ablonczy	Adams
Adler	Aglukkaq
Albas	Albrecht
Allen (Tobique—Mactaquac)	Allison
Ambler	Ambrose
Anders	Anderson
Ashfield	Aspin
Baird	Benoit
Bernier	Blaney
Block	Boughen
Braid	Breitreuz
Brown (Leeds—Grenville)	Brown (Newmarket—Aurora)
Brown (Barrie)	Bruinooeg
Butt	Calandra
Calkins	Cannan
Carmichael	Chisu
Chong	Clarke
Clement	Daniel
Davidson	Dechert
Devolin	Dreschen
Duncan (Vancouver Island North)	Dykstra
Fantino	Finley (Haldimand—Norfolk)
Fletcher	Galipeau
Gill	Glover
Goguen	Golding
Goodyear	Gosal
Gourde	Grewal
Harper	Harris (Cariboo—Prince George)
Hawn	Hayes
Hiebert	Hillyer
Hoback	Hoepfner
Holder	James
Jean	Kamp (Pitt Meadows—Maple Ridge—Mission)
Keddy (South Shore—St. Margaret's)	Kenney (Calgary Southeast)
Kent	Kerr
Komarnicki	Kramp (Prince Edward—Hastings)
Lake	Lauzon
Lebel	Leef
Lemieux	Leung
Lizon	Lobb
Lukowski	Lunney
MacKay (Central Nova)	MacKenzie
McColeman	McLeod



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Merrifield	Miller
Moore (Port Moody—Westwood—Port Coquitlam)	
Moore (Fundy Royal)	
Nicholson	O'Connor
O'Neill Gordon	Obhrai
Oda	Oliver
Opitz	Paradis
Payne	Penashue
Poilievre	Preston
Raitt	Rajotte
Rathgeber	Reid
Rempel	Richards
Richardson	Rickford
Saxton	Schellenberger
Seebach	Shea
Shipley	Shory
Smith	Sopuck
Sorenson	Stanton
Storseth	Sweet
Tilson	Toet
Toews	Trost
Trottier	Truppe
Tweed	Uppal
Van Kesteren	Van Loan
Vellacott	Wallace
Warawa	Warkentin
Watson	Weston (West Vancouver—Sunshine Coast—Sea to Sky Country)
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Allen (Weland)	Andrews
Angus	Ashton
Atamanenko	Aubin
Ayala	Bélanger
Bellavance	Bennett
Benskin	Blanchette
Blanchette-Lamothe	Boivin
Borg	Boulerice
Boutin-Sweet	Brisson
Brousseau	Byrne
Caron	Cassey
Chicoine	Chisholm
Choquette	Chow
Christopherson	Cleary
Coderre	Comartin
Côté	Cotler
Cullen	Cuzner
Davies (Vancouver Kingsway)	Day
Dewar	Dion
Dionne Labelle	Donnelly
Doré Lefebvre	Dubé
Duncan (Etobicoke North)	Duncan (Edmonton—Strathcona)
Easter	Eyking

Footé	Fortin
Frecman	Fry
Gameau	Garrison
Genest	Genest-Jourdain
Giguère	Godin
Goodale	Gravelle
Grogubé	Harris (Scarborough Southwest)
Harris (St. John's East)	Hassainia
Hsu	Hughes
Hyer	Jacob
Julian	Karygiannis
Kellway	Lamoureux
Lapointe	Larose
Latendresse	Laverdière
LeBlanc (LaSalle—Émard)	Leslie
Liu	MacAulay
Mai	Marston
Martin	Masse
Mathysen	May
McCallum	McGuinity
Michaud	Morin (Chicoutimi—Le Fjord)
Morin (Notre-Dame-de-Grâce—Lachine)	Morin (Laurentides—Labelle)
Morin (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot)	Mulcair
Murray	Nantel
Nash	Nicholls
Nunez-Melo	Pacetti
Papillon	Patry
Perreault	Pilon
Plamondon	Quach
Rac	Rafferty
Ravignat	Raynault
Regan	Rousseau
Saganash	Sandhu
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**PAIRED**

Nil

**The Speaker:** I declare the motion carried. Accordingly, the bill stands referred to the Standing Committee on Finance.

(Bill read the second time and referred to a committee)

**The Speaker:** The motion that the House do now adjourn is deemed to have been adopted. Accordingly, the House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 10 a.m. pursuant to Standing Order 24(1).

(The House adjourned at 6:44 p.m.)





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HOUSE OF COMMONS  
CHAMBRE DES COMMUNES  
CANADA

# House of Commons Debates

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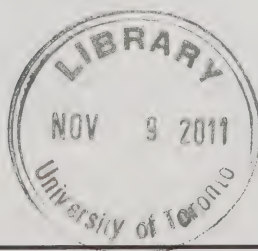
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OFFICIAL REPORT  
(HANSARD)

**Tuesday, October 18, 2011**

Speaker: The Honourable Andrew Scheer



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# HOUSE OF COMMONS

Tuesday, October 18, 2011

The House met at 10 a.m.

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*Prayers*

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## ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

●(1005)

[English]

### MARKETING FREEDOM FOR GRAIN FARMERS ACT

**Hon. Gerry Ritz (Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food and Minister for the Canadian Wheat Board, CPC)** moved for leave to introduce Bill C-18, An Act to reorganize the Canadian Wheat Board and to make consequential and related amendments to certain Acts.

(Motions deemed adopted, bill read the first time and printed)

\* \* \*

### BANKRUPTCY AND INSOLVENCY ACT

**Mr. Wayne Marston (Hamilton East—Stoney Creek, NDP):** moved for leave to introduce Bill C-331, An Act to amend the Bankruptcy and Insolvency Act and the Companies' Creditors Arrangement Act (pension plans).

He said: Mr. Speaker, in Canada today when a company goes out of business and the employees' pension plan is wound up, under Canada's outdated bankruptcy laws, pensioners must wait behind every imaginable financial and corporate interest before getting paid out from the company's remaining assets because, according to Canadian law, pensions are considered unsecured debt. As such, pensions are paid out at the same time as every other kind of unsecured debt. In effect, it puts pensioners at the end of the line.

The practical consequence of being at the back of the line means that pensions are too often tapped into as just another asset pool to be used to pay off other creditors. Canadians say that is wrong. They say that any retiree who has worked for generations for a company should have greater access to the company assets than vulture capitalists and bond dealers.

New Democrats believe it is time for the situation to be corrected. Let us be clear. Pensions are not just some kind of a fringe benefit. Workplace pensions are nothing less than unpaid deferred wages. That is why I am introducing my pension protection bill today.

Once enacted, the bill would move pensions further up the line of creditors to be paid out during bankruptcy proceedings. Amending Canada's bankruptcy laws to provide greater protection for pensioners is an issue of considerable importance to the NDP.

In the last election, this particular promise was on the front page of our platform. For New Democrats this question is very straightforward. How many more victims will there be before we fix our outdated bankruptcy laws? We know the stories of Nortel, Fraser Paper and AbitibiBowater and the dozens of mills that closed in Quebec and in British Columbia.

One thing is sure, and that is the current government has not been prepared to act, has not been prepared to extend the pensions, the common sense protection Canadians deserve. New Democrats are ready, and thus we are introducing this bill today.

(Motions deemed adopted, bill read the first time and printed)

●(1010)

**Hon. Gordon O'Connor (Minister of State and Chief Government Whip, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, there have been consultations, and I believe you will find agreement for the following motion: "That, notwithstanding any Standing Order or usual practices of the House, when the House begins proceedings under the provisions of Standing Order 53.1 today, no quorum calls, requests for unanimous consent or dilatory motions shall be received by the Speaker and, any member rising to speak during debate may inform the Speaker that he or she will be dividing his or her time with another member."

**The Speaker:** Does the chief government whip have the unanimous consent of the House to propose this motion?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**Some hon. members:** No.

*Privilege*

**Hon. Jim Karygiannis (Scarborough—Agincourt, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the people of Syria, through their protests, have been asking for democracy and an end to the rule of President Bashar al-Assad. The number of people who have been killed during the protest has reached 3,000. According to the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, President Bashar al-Assad has ordered the military to put down the protesters. The measures employed by the military have included gunning down unarmed protesters, searching people's homes for suspected protesters and jailing hundreds for expressing a wish for democracy and fundamental justice.

Syrian Canadians are looking to their government to condemn the brutal attacks in Syria—

**The Speaker:** Order. Does the hon. member have a motion or is he reading a speech?

**Hon. Jim Karygiannis:** I am reading a motion.

**The Speaker:** I would ask him to come to the motion.

**Hon. Jim Karygiannis:** Mr. Speaker, I seek unanimous consent for the following motion, which is seconded by the member for York West: "That this House condemn the brutal attacks on members of the Syrian movement for democratic change and accountable government by the Bashar al-Assad regime; call on the Bashar al-Assad regime to meet the Arab League 15-day deadline to enact a ceasefire and to begin a dialogue between government officials and opposition representatives; accept the United Nations Human Rights Council's commission of inquiry into the violence of Syria to find out exactly what happened and to put an end to civilian deaths; and, ensure that all the perpetrators of these attacks are brought to justice and bear the full weight of the law."

**The Speaker:** Does the hon. member for Scarborough—Agincourt have unanimous consent to propose the motion?

**Some hon. members:** No.

[Translation]

**Mr. André Bellavance:** Mr. Speaker, I could not give my consent to the member's motion and I want to explain why. It is not that the motion is unsound; it is that he has a bad habit of not consulting the other parties—at least not ours—when moving this kind of motion. Therefore, we must refuse unanimous consent.

\*\*\*

[English]

**QUESTIONS ON THE ORDER PAPER**

**Mr. Tom Lukiwski (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I ask that all questions be allowed to stand.

**The Speaker:** Is that agreed?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

\*\*\*

**REQUEST FOR EMERGENCY DEBATE****SYRIA**

**The Speaker:** The chair has notice of an application for emergency debate from the hon. member for Scarborough—Agincourt.

**Hon. Jim Karygiannis (Scarborough—Agincourt, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I seek to have an emergency debate. The people of Syria and Canadian Syrians are looking to this House to address what is happening in Syria, to make sure the perpetrators are called to justice, and to make sure that the regime completely falls and a democratic process takes place. There have been over 4,000 people killed in Syria over the last few months.

On behalf of the people of Syria and Canadian Syrians, I look to you, Mr. Speaker, to rule that this House should hold an emergency debate on this very important subject in order to fully discuss it.

**The Speaker:** I thank the hon. for bringing this matter to the attention of the chair. While I am sure it is an important issue to many, I do not think that it meets the test for granting an emergency debate at this time.

The hon. member for Malpeque has a question of privilege.

\*\*\*

● (1015)

**PRIVILEGE****LEGISLATION TO REORGANIZE THE CANADIAN WHEAT BOARD**

**Hon. Wayne Easter (Malpeque, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I rise on a question of privilege.

The government has tabled Bill C-18 today and I have the legislation in my hands. This bill would terminate the single desk selling authority of the Canadian Wheat Board, in effect terminating the existing Canadian Wheat Board.

**Some hon. members:** Hear! Hear!

**Hon. Wayne Easter:** Mr. Speaker, I do not know why members on the government side would applaud, because my whole question of privilege is based on the fact that the Conservative government is violating the very laws of this land in its action in terms of tabling Bill C-18 the way it is worded today.

The government has tried to use some fancy language in the bill, but in summary, the bill would change the governing structure of the Canadian Wheat Board. The Conservatives say that the new act continues the Canadian Wheat Board but changes it with the marketing of grain through voluntary pooling. Part III provides for the possible continuation of the board under other federal legislation. Part IV provides for its winding up if no such continuation occurs.

There is no question that the position of the Conservative Party and the government has been one of long standing, an initiative they have attempted through previous efforts, which is to do away with the Canadian Wheat Board. Some of those efforts have been determined to be illegal, but the Conservatives have attempted them even though they have been determined to be illegal. I submit that what the government is doing today is also illegal.



There is no ambiguity in what the government intends by this legislation as the government's intent has been stated by the Prime Minister, ministers and individual members of Parliament on any number of occasions. I would even go so far as to say that both the minister and his parliamentary secretary have violated their oaths of office in the way they have been attacking the Canadian Wheat Board over the years and through this legislation today. The words of the Minister of Agriculture in recent days have been very crude. He basically said that the Canadian Wheat Board would be toast by Christmas.

I would submit that western farmers have a right to be concerned about the integrity of the government as represented by the Minister of Agriculture on this issue.

On March 28, 2011, while attending an agricultural forum in Minnedosa, Manitoba, the minister stated with respect to the issue of whether he would respect the vote of farmers and that no attempt to undermine the board would occur until a vote were held:

Until farmers make that change, I'm not prepared to work arbitrarily.... They are absolutely right to believe in democracy. I do, too.

The legislation goes against what the minister said in that statement. There has been no vote under Section 47.1 of the act as the act demands, yet here we are today. So much for the minister and his so-called commitment to democracy for the farmers of western Canada.

The intention of the legislation to terminate the Canadian Wheat Board in favour of the creation of a "voluntary" Canadian Wheat Board as part of the private grain trade goes against the wishes of the board of directors of the Wheat Board itself.

It is my position that this legislation exceeds the authority of the government on the basis that it has neglected to fill an obligation currently in legislation. Section 47.1 of the Canadian Wheat Board Act reads:

The Minister shall not cause to be introduced in Parliament a bill that would exclude any kind, type, class or grade of wheat or barley, or wheat or barley produced in any area in Canada, from the provisions of Part IV, either in whole or in part, or generally, or for any period, or that would extend the application of Part III or Part IV or both Parts III and IV to any other grains, unless

(a) the Minister has consulted with the board about the exclusion or extension; and

(b) the producers of the grain have voted in favour of the exclusion or extension, the voting process having been determined by the Minister.

● (1020)

The intent of section 47.1, as contained in the legislation brought forward by a Liberal government, was stated clearly to the House on October 7, 1997 at page 571 of *Debates* by the minister of agriculture at that time.

It states:

Throughout its history the Canadian Wheat Board has been governed by a small group of up to five commissioners, all appointed by the Government of Canada without any requirement that anybody be consulted and legally responsible only to the Government of Canada. But in today's dynamic [1997] and changing marketplace, producers have made it clear that they want the Canadian Wheat Board to be more accountable to them. They want more control...empowering producers, enshrining democratic authority which has never existed before, providing new accountability, new flexibility and responsiveness, and positioning farmers to shape the kind of wheat board they want for the future.

### Privilege

The 1997 bill was about giving farmers the right to control their own destinies and their own institution, that being the Canadian Wheat Board. Under section 47.1, Parliament gave them the clear authority to have a say by providing them the ability to vote prior to the government making any changes to that act.

Through this legislation, the government is denying farmers a legally constituted right that is currently provided for in legislation. All Canadians should be worried about this affront to democracy. Farmers were given protection under a law passed by Parliament which the minister is violating. If the government can violate that law, it can violate laws that protect other people as well.

**The Speaker:** Order. I have not yet heard anything that would indicate to the Chair that the House's privileges have been affected. It is not the normal practice of the Chair to comment on the legality of legislation. That is usually done by the courts.

If the Chief Government Whip is rising on the same point, I will recognize him briefly.

I will then return to the member for Malpeque. I would ask him to advise the Chair if he has anything of substance to add as to where the House's privileges have been affected and, if so, I would appreciate that he get to that point quickly.

**Hon. Gordon O'Connor (Minister of State and Chief Government Whip, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, if this question of privilege continues I would like to reserve the right to have a more lengthy argument.

My fundamental argument is that this is the House of Commons where we can pass laws subject to the Supreme Court. We can pass laws as long as they do not affect the Constitution or involve other legislatures. We can bring in laws that amend previous laws that can go back to 1867. We have that right. We have been elected by the people.

**The Speaker:** I would remind the members that when this bill is brought before the House there will be ample opportunity for them to make their cases about how they might feel about the bill. However, at this point in the day, the Chair needs to hear where the House's privileges or existing Standing Orders have been affected. Therefore, I will allow the member for Malpeque to come to that point in his argument before we move on.

The hon. member for Malpeque.

**Hon. Wayne Easter:** Mr. Speaker, the privileges of the House are being affected. We are elected here to represent Canadians in our democracy and to ensure that laws are upheld.

The House leader for the governing party is right that laws can be amended. However, in this instance we are dealing with a law of the land that we are to uphold, which the minister took an oath of office to uphold, which under section 47.1 of legislation of this House provides producers the right to have a vote prior to doing that. That violates my privileges as well as yours, Mr. Speaker, and certainly those of your constituents.

### *Privilege*

I feel that everyone's privileges, mine, those of my colleagues and those of the members on the government side, are being abused because in this chamber, which is supposed to be the essence of democracy, we have a minister who is violating his oath of office, and a government that is bringing in legislation which does not allow us to uphold a law that was passed in this place. That is how my privileges as a member are being affected.

Imagine how farmers' privileges are being affected after believing that their right to have a say in their destinies was enshrined in legislation under section 47.1 before the government brought in this legislation, which is in violation of that.

I believe that my privileges as well as those of everyone in the House and, indeed through us, those of Canadians, are being affected. This is an affront to democracy.

•(1025)

**Mr. Frank Valeriote (Guelph, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I too rise in support of the question of privilege brought forward by the hon. member for Malpeque.

I stood yesterday in the House and argued in defence of the rights of western Canadian grain farmers and all Canadians that the insistence of the Conservative government to move ahead with this legislation, despite its refusal to respect section 47.1 of the Canadian Wheat Board Act, was an issue that, in abrogating the rights of farmers, was a matter demanding urgent attention by the Minister for the Canadian Wheat Board and by this House.

Section 47.1 of the act is clear. I will not repeat the entire portion of the section as the member for Malpeque did that quite adequately.

We know that the minister must comply with the law. The government is missing a key element in its ideological pursuit of the death of the single desk sales and marketing system, the will of western Canadian grain farmers. Consequently, the legislation before us exceeds the authority of the government based on its neglect in fulfilling all of its obligations.

The institution of the Canadian Wheat Board is considered so sacrosanct that codified in the statute is a mechanism designed to protect farmers from a government arbitrarily removing the strength and clout of an agency that markets and sells wheat and barley at the best possible price on behalf of all western Canadian grain farmers.

Section 47.1 was enshrined in the Canadian Wheat Board Act to prevent the very abuse that is being perpetrated by the minister and the government this morning. It is not up to me or the minister to determine the fate of the single desk marketing and sales system. It is up to farmers.

The government insists it is motivated by choice. However, it is forcing its will on farmers, not asking them. Meanwhile our party's position has been consistent from the beginning: let farmers decide.

This is an issue about the right of self-determination by farmers, a right so important it was enshrined in legislation. The only conclusion to be drawn from this is that the Conservative government has not only ignored the consequences of its actions but has acted in deliberate contravention of the legislation it is seeking to modify.

Mr. Speaker, I ask that you find a *prima facie* case of a violation of this House's privilege.

**Mr. Tom Lukiwski (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I believe you dealt with this adequately in your earlier intervention. Just to underscore exactly what you said, because you were quite correct, there is no privilege here. The members opposite are talking about a matter of law. The Speaker does not rule on matters of law; he rules on matters of procedure.

Mr. Speaker, there can be no privilege in this case. I believe you were about to make a ruling on that during your original intervention of the question of privilege by the member for Malpeque. I ask you to consider doing that now.

I do not believe the government need make any further interventions because quite clearly privilege has not been affected here. Members' rights have not been impugned.

Mr. Speaker, the members opposite are asking you to make a ruling on a matter of law, which is outside of your purview. You know that as well as I do, as should every member of this House.

Mr. Speaker, if you would not mind, I would ask for an immediate ruling.

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I will get right to the point. I would submit that to place this legislation before the House and seek its support would require members of the House to endorse legislation which begins from a premise that contravenes an existing law and thus places members of the House in an untenable and unacceptable position. The bottom line is we need to recognize the legislation the government is proposing and the chamber will vote on. When we talk about the privileges of the chamber, we are talking about procedures and enabling a fair process of debate.

The legislation the government is asking us to debate is in violation of a law. The government should do the right thing by withdrawing the legislation and bringing forward a motion or the honourable thing by allowing the prairie grain farmers a plebiscite. Bringing forward legislation or a piece of law that would ultimately break an existing law is wrong. We should not accept the Prime Minister's attitude that the vote of the prairie grain or wheat farmer is trash. That was a legitimate vote.

•(1030)

**Hon. Ted Menzies:** Why wasn't I given a ballot?

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux:** You had a responsibility to have a plebiscite before you brought in this legislation.

Mr. Speaker, because the government did not do that it is in violation of the privileges of each and every member of the chamber. I would suggest that this is indeed a valid question of privilege. If the government had an ounce of integrity it would do the honourable thing and members would provide it leave to withdraw this legislation.

**The Speaker:** The hon. Chief Government Whip is rising. I urge him to keep his remarks brief as I do not want this part of the day to turn into extra rounds of debate and speeches on the substance of bills. However, I will give him a brief opportunity to respond.



**Hon. Gordon O'Connor:** Mr. Speaker, I will keep my comments brief.

As I said before, we are elected in the House of Commons to enact legislation. We have a right to introduce legislation, to debate it here and, if successful, to pass it. We can amend any law we want going back to 1867. We are not talking about privilege when introducing this bill. If this bill is not allowed to come in and we cannot amend previous laws then my privileges will be violated.

**The Speaker:** I thank hon. members for their interventions. I will take the case under advisement and come back to the House with a decision in due course.

## GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[Translation]

### COPYRIGHT MODERNIZATION ACT

**Hon. Christian Paradis (Minister of Industry and Minister of State (Agriculture), CPC)** moved that Bill C-11, An Act to amend the Copyright Act, be read the second time and referred to a committee.

He said: Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to speak this morning at second reading of Bill C-11, the Copyright Modernization Act.

[English]

With the permission of the House, I will be splitting my time with the Minister of Canadian Heritage and Official Languages.

**The Speaker:** Does the hon. minister have the unanimous consent of the House to share his time with the Minister of Canadian Heritage and Official Languages?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

[Translation]

**Hon. Christian Paradis:** Mr. Speaker, as you know, this is the second time that the government has introduced this bill. During the previous Parliament and for almost a year, the Copyright Modernization Act—then known as Bill C-32—was carefully examined and debated by parliamentarians and stakeholders.

We know how much time and effort members of Parliament, stakeholders and Canadians spent on this bill. The legislative committee created to examine the bill heard from more than 70 witnesses and received more than 150 submissions. All stakeholders were consulted, and the government received letters from across the country.

[English]

We fully expect that when the bill is once again referred to a House of Commons committee the work and testimony from the previous Parliament will be carefully considered and taken into account.

Over the course of the committee hearings on this bill in the last Parliament, there were two clear messages that emerged. The first message was that this bill balances the interests of the various stakeholders. The bill, a product of wide-ranging consultation and discussion, sets out a balanced approach to corporate reform in the

### Government Orders

digital age. While the government strongly believes that this bill delivers the best balance between the interests of consumers and the rights of the creative community, we are open to technical amendments that may improve the clarity and intent of certain provisions.

Second, we heard that Canada urgently needs to pass legislation to update the Copyright Act. By reintroducing this same bill, parliamentarians will be able to build on this previous work in order to enable the swift passage of these important legislative updates. Each year that Canada goes without modern copyright laws, the need for such modernization becomes more evident as technology evolves and new issues emerge.

The last time the act was changed, there were no MP3 players. Video stores were still full of VHS tapes. No one thought we would be able to take pictures with a cellphone and upload them onto computer screens around the world, or use a cellphone to download songs and movies.

The world has changed so much since then that the Copyright Act seems like a law for a different era. The time has come to modernize Canada's copyright laws and bring them in line with the demands and technologies of the digital age.

• (1035)

[Translation]

This bill must be passed in order to modernize Canada's copyright regime in accordance with the government's digital economy strategy.

Digital technology opens new markets and expands the reach of companies. It brings together people and ideas in a way that was still unimaginable only a few years ago. When individuals, companies and national economies create and adopt these new technologies, a number of important things are achieved. Productivity and innovation increase, and new products, processes and business models see the light of day.

The growth of the digital economy in Canada depends on a clear, predictable and fair copyright regime that supports creativity and innovation while protecting copyright holders.

The global economy remains fragile. This bill will help to protect existing jobs and create new ones. It will spark innovation and attract new investments in Canada. It will give creators and copyright holders the tools they need to protect their work and increase their business. The bill establishes clearer rules that will allow all Canadians to fully participate in the digital economy, both now and in the future.

One of the bill's main objectives is to balance the interests of all stakeholders in the copyright regime. Achieving this balance has become increasingly complex given the exponential growth of the Internet. Canadians can obtain protected works online, sometimes through revenue-generating platforms or services, but also through free services, both legitimate and illegitimate. Our capacity to use high-quality Web services to obtain, protect and create copyrighted works is essential to our economic success and our cultural presence in the world.

*Government Orders*

That is why, in 2009, our government turned to Canadians to get their ideas and advice on copyright reform in the digital age. Thousands of individual Canadians, companies and stakeholder organizations shared their opinions on the best way to adapt Canada's copyright regime to this new age. These consultations showed that Canadians were becoming increasingly aware of the importance of copyright in their daily lives and in our digital economy.

On the one hand, this bill seeks to reflect today's reality where the private, non-commercial use of copyrighted material is commonplace. The bill would authorize many of these uses and establish parameters for cases which, to date, were not well defined.

For example, Canadians could copy works legally obtained on their computers and mobile devices to enjoy them wherever they may be. They could store content in and retrieve it from the information cloud or use a network PVR service.

It will also be legal to integrate protected works into a work generated by a user for non-commercial purposes. That would include recording a home video of a child dancing to a song, or creating original mixes of songs and videos. This exception requires that the rights and interests of copyright holders be respected. There are many examples where copyright holders have benefited from exposure on the Internet owing to work done by users.

Finally, the bill updates the Copyright Act to reflect new technologies and uses by broadening the exceptions and creating new ones for educational and training institutions, technical procedures, the development of software, broadcasters and the disabled.

I would like to point out that great care was taken when drafting these provisions to reflect the needs and interests of copyright holders. The provisions do place limits and restrictions on the use of protected works.

For example, many of these exceptions do not apply to works protected by a technological protection measure or digital lock. Copyright holders told us that their digital and on-line business models depend on the robust protection provided by digital locks. Therefore, the bill strikes a good balance. It allows Canadians to make reasonable use of content while providing creators and businesses, whose work depends on this content, with the tools and certainty they need to launch new products and services.

● (1040)

[English]

While our government knows that the overwhelming majority of Canadians are law-abiding, we are concerned about the threat of major penalties that hang over Canadians who infringe copyright for non-commercial purposes. Currently, those who have been found to violate copyright can be found liable for damages from \$500 to \$20,000 per work.

If people illegally download five songs, for example, they could theoretically be liable for \$100,000. In our view, such penalties are way out of line. As such, the bill proposes to reduce the penalties for non-commercial infringement. Under its provisions, the courts

would have the flexibility to award total damages of between \$100 and \$5,000.

[Translation]

However, while the bill reduces penalties for non-commercial infringements, it still seriously punishes those who profit from copyright infringement. Penalties of \$500 to \$20,000 per infringement will still apply to piracy for commercial purposes. In addition, the bill proposes new tools to target those who find techniques to infringe online copyright and it sets out serious penalties for those who make money by creating and distributing devices and services designed to hack digital locks. It will be very difficult to benefit from piracy.

[English]

**Mr. Charlie Angus (Timmins—James Bay, NDP):** Madam Speaker, I listened with great interest to my hon. colleague and I heard the word "balanced" being used time and time again, and yet the bill is very unbalanced.

We are not here talking about copyright, the right of creators and who has their copies. This bill is about corporate right, the right of a corporate entity to decide what right citizens have. It is a sleight of hand. It is very important for people to recognize that the bill is offering citizens' rights that they will not be able to exercise if a corporate entity puts a digital lock on the product.

Looking at how our WIPO compliant countries around the world have dealt with the issue of digital locks, and under sections 10 and 11 of the WIPO copyright treaty, it talks about the right to have exemptions of the digital lock as long as it is not being broken or infringed for commercial purposes, but in order to give citizens the right to access works to which under a legislative regime they have a right to access. However, under the bill, any rights that the citizen is granted in the bill are arbitrarily taken away with the digital lock provisions.

Will the government work with the New Democratic Party to fix the digital lock provisions to ensure they do not unfairly target students and consumers who are legally entitled to access works? If we fix the digital lock provisions, would the Conservatives be willing to work with us to ensure we are WIPO compliant but also responding to the needs that citizens have on this issue?

● (1045)

[Translation]

**Hon. Christian Paradis:** Madam Speaker would like to thank the hon. member for his question.

I was coming to the aspect of innovation. As the member so rightly said, we need to talk about balance here because that is what is reflected in this bill.



There are many interests at stake here: those of consumers, creators, authors and artists. It should be said that we have held thousands of consultations, and now we are presenting a balanced and complex approach. Digital locks are important for encouraging innovation. We cannot tell product creators that it is “game over”, not after they have invested millions and millions of dollars. There has to be some degree of protection.

Plus, the market is still doing what it is meant to do: consumers are still free choose whether or not to purchase products with digital locks.

[English]

**Hon. Geoff Regan (Halifax West, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, the hon. minister spoke about bringing forward a modern copyright law but what we see with the provisions on digital locks is that the government is going backward. It is a regressive position. He says that this is a balanced approach but allowing digital locks to trump the interests and rights of consumers is the complete opposite of a balanced approach. It does not make sense at all.

The Conservatives are saying that people can reformat it or copy it onto their iPod, or whatever, as long as there is not a digital lock. All the corporation has to do is put on a digital lock and consumers are out of luck. If a young mother wants to transfer a movie from a DVD onto an iPod, she cannot do it. How is this possibly a balanced approach?

[Translation]

**Hon. Christian Paradis:** Madam Speaker, with respect, to position the problem at the very end of the spectrum, as my colleague just did, is inappropriate. We need to look at the innovation aspect. Canada is a leader, a real trailblazer, in the development of the digital economy, digital products and software, for example. A minimum of protection must be ensured. We cannot ask creators to invest millions of dollars without any protection. This is an aspect of balance that must be taken into account. Many products such as DVDs do not have digital locks and the market is doing its job in that respect. We have simply taken into account the interests of all stakeholders.

With this copyright legislation, we are finally entering the 21st century. The current legislation deals with VHS and other technologies that are no longer even on the market or being used by consumers. Thus, showing true leadership, we decided to introduce a balanced bill that takes into account the interests of everyone: consumers, creators, authors and artists.

[English]

**Hon. James Moore (Minister of Canadian Heritage and Official Languages, CPC):** Madam Speaker, I am very pleased to be here with the Minister of Industry. I should also certainly give a great deal of thanks to the President of the Treasury Board for the work that he did on Bill C-32, which was last Parliament's version of Bill C-11, which we are debating today.

As the Minister of Industry said, the bill contains a number of provisions that Canadians, I think, will welcome and are welcoming. The bill contains provisions that will provide the ability of copyright owners to control the uses of their works to fight online piracy. This is about individual creators and creative industries, like the video game industry, the software industry, the movie industry, and others.

### *Government Orders*

It is having the tools to protect their art, their businesses and their jobs.

[Translation]

For example, the bill includes provisions to protect the technological protection measures and authorizes copyright holders to sue those who enable copyright infringement through such means as illegal peer-to-peer file sharing sites. Our government knows that the best way to deal with online copyright violation is to target those who enable this crime and profit from it.

More specifically, Bill C-11 introduces a new definition of civil liability for those who knowingly enable online copyright violation. Online piracy takes revenues away from creators and reduces the incentive to create. This measure sends a clear message that Canada is prohibiting piracy sites and giving copyright holders the tools to protect their activities. What is more, the bill also introduces new provisions to stop those who develop and sell tools and services for getting around technological protection measures.

• (1050)

[English]

Canada is among the first jurisdictions in the world, if not the first, to provide its copyright legislation with this very important tool to fight online piracy. At the same time, we are taking steps to ensure that Canadians are aware that they may be infringing copyright. Canadian Internet service providers have developed a unique model in which they tell subscribers when a rights holder notifies them that a subscriber has infringed on copyright material. This is known as notice and notice. The bill formalizes this practice into law. I would just point out here that this is one of the key elements that consumers have come to us and said they want as part of the bill.

We disagree with the American approach with regard to copyright. We have a notice and notice regime in our legislation, not a notice and take down regime as they have in the United States, for very good reason. These provisions are also on top of a wide array of legal protections already provided for in the Copyright Act that rights holders can use to assert their rights.

[Translation]

Educators, students, artists, companies, consumers, families, copyright holders and Canadians in general use technology in a number of different ways, and this bill simply recognizes that reality. It gives creators and copyright holders the necessary tools to protect their works, their investments, and to develop their business through innovative business models. It establishes clearer rules that will allow Canadians to fully participate in the digital economy today and in the future. More specifically, this bill gives creators and copyright holders the tools they absolutely need.

*Government Orders*

[English]

With this legislation Canadians will also be able to create new works incorporating existing publishing or publicly available works, as long as it is done for non-commercial purposes, as my colleague has said. The new user generated content cannot be a substitute for the original work or have the substantial negative impacts on the markets of the original material or on a creator's reputation.

Canadians with perceptual disabilities will be permitted to adapt legally acquired material to a format that they can easily use. Also, Canadian photographers will benefit from the same authorship rights as creators. Currently, photographers are not considered authors of commissioned works. This legislation changes that.

Consumers and users of content will also see their interests reflected in the bill. Canadians will be allowed to record television, radio and Internet programs to enjoy at their time and choosing with no restrictions as to the device or technology chosen or the time of day.

[Translation]

Under certain conditions, Canadians will also be able to copy for their personal use legally acquired works such as music, movies or other works, on the device or component of their choice. They will be able to make backup copies in the format and on the device or component of their choice.

[English]

I would like to close my speech by ensuring the House understands that this was, from the very beginning of the process that we initiated just prior to the summer of 2009, a good faith effort on the part of our government to get copyright legislation done effectively.

The member for Timmins—James Bay was engaged in debate on Bill C-61 when we tabled that legislation. Bill C-61, as it turned out, was not the balance that Canadians were looking for. We think this legislation achieves the balance that Canadians have come to expect. We tabled Bill C-61, there was the fall campaign, and then we came back.

We re-engaged Canadians from the beginning. We went back to square one. We did unprecedented consultation on this legislation. We heard from thousands of Canadians in the process. We went across the country to town halls and we did open, online consultation. We arrived at Bill C-32.

As a result of the participation of thousands of Canadians in that process, we thought we would respect that process—

**Mr. Marc Garneau:** And 141 in committee and you haven't changed a thing.

**Hon. James Moore:** Mr. Speaker, the member over there, who barely won his seat and who thinks he is an authority on everything, is chirping at me.

We tabled Bill C-32 after unprecedented consultation and we respected the process, and we retabled this legislation. As the member said, we had 141 witnesses before the committee and it would be disrespectful to those witnesses if we did not allow the

process to continue. The reason we tabled this legislation is to continue the process, to show respect to those members of the committee, and to all members who have been involved in this process.

● (1055)

[Translation]

**Hon. Denis Coderre:** Madam Speaker, I have been in the House of Commons for 15 years and I think that the minister insulted my colleague. He talks about respect, but I would ask him to show some respect, to address his remarks through the Chair and to stop making personal attacks. I find that unacceptable.

**The Deputy Speaker:** I would ask all members to show respect and to wait their turn before speaking. That way, I think we could avoid unnecessary exchanges.

On another point of order, the hon. member for Westmount—Ville-Marie.

**Mr. Marc Garneau:** Madam Speaker, I would like the minister to apologize for saying that I barely won my seat in the last election. That has nothing to do with the debate today, and I think it is bad manners.

**The Deputy Speaker:** I thank the members for their comments. Indeed, it is not nice. I do not believe it can be considered unparliamentary, but I would ask the hon. minister to finish his comments and to make sure they are related to the bill. He has two minutes remaining.

I would also ask all members to wait their turn and to be recognized by me before speaking.

[English]

**Hon. James Moore:** Madam Speaker, I only include this little interlude with the fact that since Liberal members of Parliament were heckling me during my speech, I responded to the heckling, and now they are saying that it was disrespectful for me to respond to their heckling.

I would note to viewers who are watching this debate that there are 103 New Democrats in the House who are participating in this debate. The member for Timmins—James Bay has not been heckling. There is a handful of Liberals over there who have been heckling every procedure in the House and then they get up and badger others for not participating. Quite an interesting approach by the Liberals, but that is why they are where they are.

**Hon. Geoff Regan:** Madam Speaker, I rise on a point of order. The minister has talked about heckling when, in fact, he himself was heckling earlier this morning. It is very inappropriate for him to be talking about it. He is in no position to cast aspersions in this fashion.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Order, please. I would agree there has been heckling on both sides of the House and I would ask all members to maintain decorum, so that this debate can proceed in the way Canadians expect members to debate.

The hon. minister's time has almost elapsed. He has 30 seconds to conclude.



**Hon. James Moore:** Madam Speaker, let us go back to serious leaders of the Liberal Party of past times. It was John Manley who said, “The government has struck an appropriate balance with this legislation about the rights of Canadian creators and the needs of consumers. The government is providing badly needed protection to Canadians who create music, films, games and digital works. This bill also recognizes the legitimate rights of Canadian families, schools and libraries to make use of copyrighted materials. To protect jobs and enhance Canada’s ability to compete, this legislation goes in the right direction”. That is what serious Liberals think of this legislation, and we are happy to have—

**The Deputy Speaker:** Questions and comments, the hon. member for Timmins—James Bay.

**Mr. Charlie Angus (Timmins—James Bay, NDP):** Madam Speaker, my hon. colleague and I have clashed many times over the years, and have talked many times.

I would like to at least thank him for ensuring that folks back home know that the New Democratic Party is not engaged in the kids in the sandbox routine on the copyright debate that the Liberals are engaged in.

This is serious business. Updating our copyright regime is serious business. We have to treat this with the importance that it deserves.

I did participate in all the hearings on Bill C-32 and we heard hundreds of witnesses. There was a wide-ranging set of views on this. We came again and again to certain technical problems with the bill that had to be fixed.

One of those key problems has to do with the issue of long distance education because in a digital realm we have such incredible opportunity to educate and to have cultural exchanges across this vast country of Canada. One of the technical problems in Bill C-32 is the obligation that class notes have to be destroyed after 30 days because they are transmitted through a digital format.

We think that will create a two-tier set of rights for education, one set of rights for students in a normal school and a lesser set of rights for students taking long distance education.

Will the government be willing to work with the New Democratic Party to fix that problematic area of this bill, so that we ensure that we get the maximum benefit of digital education for the vast regions of Canada?

• (1100)

**Hon. James Moore:** Madam Speaker, I graduated university in 1999. The University of Northern British Columbia, which actually has satellite campuses on aboriginal reserves, was one of the first universities to engage in this kind of digital learning that my colleague is talking about. We certainly want to protect that kind of education.

The provision that the member refers to in this legislation was not arrived at by the government. It was arrived at after talking to educators, the council of ministers of education, which is every education minister in the country save for the province of Quebec, who offered this proposal that we have in this legislation that we think arrives at the right balance.

### *Government Orders*

The reason for the 30-day limit, of course, is to protect those people, those professors and those educators who are involved in the publishing industry with regard to textbooks. We want to ensure that they will have a business and a business model.

This is the compromise that we have arrived at. We think it works. This provision along with the others with regard to fair dealing and education are the reason why the council of ministers of education across the country, including NDP, Liberal and Conservative education ministers, have endorsed this legislation as being what is best for education.

The member asked if we are prepared to work together. Certainly, this is why we tabled the same legislation as Bill C-32. We want to continue the study.

If my hon. colleague has an amendment he wants to draft and bring forward, we will consider that. We are not obtuse in the way that we are approaching this legislation. We have been open and transparent in the entire process of this bill, in the collection of information and feedback from Canadians from the beginning, through the committee process of the legislative committee, and now as we go forward with Bill C-11.

If my hon. colleague has an amendment that he has drafted and wants to talk about, our doors are open.

**Mr. Scott Simms (Bonaville—Gander—Grand Falls—Windsor, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, by way of illustration I just want to bring this subject up once again.

The problem with this bill is the give and take, the balance that the government is trying to achieve is not there. A good example would be if I had downloaded a digital book on my Kindle. All of a sudden I decide I am going to buy the new version of the iPad, so therefore I have to shift from one to the other.

Now there is a provision in this legislation that allows individuals to do that because it acknowledges the fact that it is their own property and they can shift it. However, because of the digital lock, they are no longer able to do that.

That one pulls against the other to the point where it is not a balance, it is a give and take.

The second point, is the government willing to listen to the witnesses who appeared during the special legislative committee on Bill C-32, the ones who already appeared—

**The Deputy Speaker:** Order, please. I will have to give the hon. minister time to respond.

**Hon. James Moore:** Madam Speaker, it is because we want to maintain the integrity of this process from the consultations in the beginning through the tabling of Bill C-32 and the tabling of Bill C-11, which is why we did not change anything in the bill.

We did that deliberately in order to protect the integrity of this process, so we could continue to have witnesses. Again, if witnesses want to come to the committee and offer ideas, we are more than open to it. This is why we have set up a legislative committee.

### Government Orders

I am glad this member is interested in a serious approach to the legislation. I am very hopeful that this will continue on at the committee. We want to get this right. We want to get it done effectively. I am very thankful that the member for Timmins—James Bay and the member for Bonaville—Gander—Grand Falls—Windsor are digging into the substance of this bill, so that we can have a responsible debate, not some of the stuff we have heard in the past.

**Mr. Charlie Angus (Timmins—James Bay, NDP):** Madam Speaker, I am very honoured to rise on behalf of the New Democratic Party today representing the people of the great region of Timmins—James Bay. It is my honour every day to serve them, respect their issues as constituents and bring their concerns into this venerable House of debate and legislation.

Copyright is a crucial issue for Canadians. We need to move forward with a regime of copyright reform that will bring Canada into the 21st century.

The word “copyright”, the right to make a copy, was created out of English common law. I like the alternate emphasis in French law, which is “*le droit d’auteur*”, the right of the author. These are both very similar perspectives, but there is a different balance in the equilibrium of it. It respects an interesting balance of how we develop culture within Canada in terms of the right to make a copy. Who has the right to make a copy and profit from it? That is a “copy right” that goes back to the book wars of the 1700s and 1800s in England as to who actually could control a work and the right of authors to be remunerated for their work and to have some say as to how their work is exploited.

This is a debate that went on long before the digital age and the Internet. The balance of the right to make a copy is not a property right. It has been argued over the years, and copyright lobbyists today will talk about their property and their right to protect their property. They will say they want to put a lock on the door to keep people from going in or to make them pay to go in, and that it is their property.

However, it is not a piece of property. Creativity is not a piece of personal property. It has been defined in Parliament and the courts.

I refer back to the 1841 debates where Lord Macaulay, who was a writer himself who had been ripped off and plagiarized many times over the years, fought within the English Parliament to separate the idea that it was personal property that copyright was created to protect. Macaulay at that time imitated much of the modern debate. He even talked about the pirates of that generation, the “knives who take the bread out of the mouths of deserving men”, the people who would unfairly infringe on the copyright of the author and not pay for it as they should.

At the same time, he also called copyright an evil. It is interesting that he said that. He called it a necessary evil. He said that copyright should only exist for a period to ensure the author was paid, but it could not be used to interfere with the larger development of society. He said that the creation of ideas is not something that can be compartmentalized: that when a work is created, it is brought into a larger frame. Parliamentarians around the world have been trying to find the balance between people's right of access to new ideas and the right of remuneration of the creator. Those are the two fundamental balances, and they are the balanced principles that the

New Democratic Party has articulated throughout these debates for the last number of years. The two fundamental principles in the digital age are the same as they were back in the 1800s in the book wars: ease of access and the right to remuneration.

We talk about *le droit d’auteur* and copyright, but this bill does not deal with either of those rights. It is about corporate right, which is different from copyright. The fundamental problems with this bill are the provisions on digital locks, which I will get to in a moment, and the direct attack on the collective licensing regime that has existed for artists in Canada for the last number of decades. The right of artists to have remuneration for their copies is under direct attack in point after point in this bill. I will go through the areas wherein the right of artists to be paid is being taken away and replaced by a false right, which is the right to lock down content.

The Conservatives are good about locks. They understand prisons and locks. We heard the minister say the lock will restore the market. I spent many years in the music industry and I never met an artist could feed his or her family on a lock. They feed their families on the right they have as artists to be remunerated through their mechanical royalties, television rights and book rights, and they fight very hard for mechanical royalties. It is a small amount of return for their efforts, but that return is crucial, so when the government comes along and would strike out, as it does in this bill, the mechanical royalty rights that have been guaranteed under the Copyright Board of Canada, it is depriving artists of the millions of dollars that actually make it possible to carry on the works.

● (1105)

There is no balance there, and this is what we need to restore a good copyright regime in Canada: a balance of the rights of artists and the rights of access.

The New Democratic Party has spoken out time after time in this House on the need for a long-term digital strategy so that Canadians can fully participate as digital citizens in a digital public commons. A public commons is a place where people, not just from Canada but from around the world, can exchange ideas and art.

It is certainly fraught with many problems. We have seen that with downloading and with piracy, but it is essential for cultural development in the 21st century that Canada have a long-term digital strategy. We in the New Democratic Party see the need to codify net neutrality so that the large telecom giants and BDUs are not deciding for us what kind of content we can access.



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We see establishing a national benchmark for broadband access, including in this latest spectrum auction. What provisions are there to ensure that the regions of rural Quebec and northern Alberta are given the same chance to develop in a digital economy as downtown Montreal or Vancouver? A broadband strategy that looks at the totality of our country is essential. This is the new national dream that we need to be pushing. We have heard dead silence over on the government benches in terms of a digital strategy for broadband, but for the New Democratic Party it is essential. We want to see within the programs of the Canadian government support for the enhancement of digital cultural products, because more products are moving away from the old models. Those old models worked well for us in the 1970s, but this is 2011, and we need to move toward that.

The other crucial element, which we have asked for again and again, is a copyright reform that will address the needs of Canadian consumers, artists and students in a digital realm.

Does this bill do that? No. In its present form, it does not.

What we need to do is to restore the balance. As it stands now, we cannot support this bill, but we are willing to work with the Conservative government to get this bill to committee. If we can make the vital technical changes to ensure that balance, then we are more than willing to bring our efforts as a party and to work with the government to ensure that this bill restores the balance.

I will grant that the government made efforts in Bill C-61, which was a dog's breakfast. Bill C-61 died as soon as it was born because it was the ugliest child of the backroom lobbyists, and they could never sell that publicly. Bill C-32 shows that it is obvious the Conservatives heard there were problems with Bill C-61, but we are not there yet. We have to see whether or not the government is willing to move forward.

I would like to talk about some of the major problems with this bill. There are three areas that are fundamentally flawed: the issue of the attack on collective licensing and the removal of artists' rights to be remunerated for their work, the issue of education, and the issue of digital locks.

I asked my hon. colleague, the heritage minister, about the fundamental problem with the education provisions, which is if students in Fort Albany on the James Bay coast want to take a college course, they would be obliged to burn their class notes after 30 days. As well, college professors who were teaching long-distance education courses to students in northern Canada would have to destroy all their class notes after 30 days because that is an infringement on copyright.

That requirement would mean the creation of a modern book-burning regime. As well, we would see the creation of a two-tier set of rights. There is one set of rights in the analog and paper world that would allow students going to school in Toronto to keep their class notes. Those class notes are important, because year after year students keep them to build a body of work towards getting their degree. However, students on a northern reserve trying to get long-distance learning do not have that same set of rights. They have a lesser set of rights.

• (1110)

I was absolutely shocked to hear from my hon. colleague, the heritage minister, where this crazy idea of modern book-burning had come from, this idea that after 30 days students would not have the right to their own class notes. He said it had come from the ministers of education.

I have met with the ministers of education many times, as well as people throughout the education sector, and I have never heard anyone say that the best idea for the digital development of Canadians is to make kids or adults going back to school burn their notes after 30 days.

That provision is unacceptable. It is backward thinking and it is needless. It is not protecting any business model, but it would have a major detrimental effect, so in terms of education, that provision has to go.

In terms of the digital locks, there is an important right of creators to protect their work. We can think of the amazing work of the gaming industry in Canada, particularly in Montreal, and the millions of dollars that have been invested in creating the games that people all over the world play. We want to make sure those products are not ripped off in their entirety and that business model made to disappear, so there is a provision for digital locks to protect those works.

However, the digital lock cannot override the rights that Parliament guarantees.

This legislation is going to create certain rights. An example is the right to extract the work for satire, parody, or political commentary. We all support that right, yet if there is a digital lock, we would not have that right. We have the right to access a work and move it into a new format; we are told we can do that, but if there is a digital lock on it, we cannot.

My colleague, the heritage minister, said that if we do not like the lock, then we do not have to buy the product. That is kind of a bullish way of talking. I wonder if this guy has lived in the digital world at all. How many times do people buy a product in a store? They will get it online, so if we make restrictive provisions with digital locks, people will just bypass them. That is problematic.

It is important that Canadians believe in the copyright regime, because the copyright regime is fundamental to creating a strong economy and a strong creative community. However, I would say there is not a six-year-old kid in this country who does not know how to break a digital lock, and people would break them with impunity. Should they be criminalized for that? I do not think so.

We need to look at why Canada is putting restrictive digital lock provisions in place. Under the U.S. DMCA, which is the most backward-looking copyright legislation on the planet, even the Americans have recognized the right to extract certain works.

### *Government Orders*

I will give an example to show just how boneheaded the digital lock provisions are. If a journalist on the evening news wanted to show an excerpt from a movie that was being discussed or debated, the journalist would not be able to show that excerpt because he or she would have to break the digital lock to do it. The journalist would have to show a picture of the screen. Can anyone explain to me how having a shot of the screen somehow protects the copyright and the artist when a journalist is trying to extract it for a program?

It is the same with the documentary film producers. The documentary film community is very concerned about the digital lock provisions, because they would impede their ability to extract, which is their legal right under the bill. They have all those legal rights, but if a digital lock is placed on it, they would no longer have those rights.

The government is saying that the legislation of Canada should allow U.S. multinational corporate interests to decide what rights we have. If they decide we have no rights, then we have no rights. It does not matter what the bill says or what the House of Commons says; the government is saying that it would hand over all those rights to corporate interests. That is fundamentally wrong, and it is flawed.

It is also flawed in terms of our obligations under the WIPO treaties. We are signatories to international conventions about intellectual property and we can look at how other countries have dealt with the digital lock provisions. In particular, as I said earlier, sections 10 and 11 of the WIPO copyright treaty states clearly that limitations to technological protection measures may be supported as long as they "do not conflict with a normal exploitation of the work". That is within the WIPO treaty.

I remember that my Conservative colleagues used to always say that they had to put the digital lock provisions on to be WIPO compliant. However, WIPO itself is saying that countries could decide what those exemptions and limitations are, the limitations being the technological protection measures and the exemptions being the rights that consumers and students should be able to enjoy.

● (1115)

All those rights are erased under this, so it actually puts us at a disadvantage in comparison to many of our European competitors, which have much more nuanced provisions when it comes to the digital lock provisions.

As it stands now, we have asked a fairly straightforward question on whether the government would be willing to work with us to amend the digital lock provisions to ensure that the normal rights that Canadians should legally be able to access would not be overridden by corporate rights. It has said no. Unless the digital lock provisions change, the New Democratic Party will not support the bill because it is not balanced.

We need to change the education provisions. We need to change the digital lock provisions. We also need to change the issue that the bill, time and time again, attacks the existing collective royalty rights of Canadian artists and that will not build the kind of cultural regime that we need in our country.

We have come through some of the most bizarre copyright wars of recent memory. In the United States we have seen the \$30,000 to \$50,000-plus lawsuits against kids. The large Sony, Warner, EMI companies are going after kids who download Hannah Montana songs, hitting them up with million dollar lawsuits. We have seen what is called the John Doe mass lawsuits, extending across the United States and moving into Canada, if individuals downloaded the movie *Hurt Locker*. Mass emails are being sent, suing people based on their IP addresses.

That model of attacking consumers is probably the most dead-end business model on the planet. I was so pleased to hear Canadian artists, all the great Canadian groups that came together under the Creative Music Coalition, say that they did not sue their fans, that their fans were what made them survive. The American model of suing kids, grandmothers and even dead people for copyright infringement is a dead-end model.

We have heard all this talk about piracy and the pirate bays. It is interesting that the very first pirate bay was in Los Angeles. We think Hollywood is the natural place to make movies, but it is not. Why, in God's name, when the vast majority of the U.S. population lives on the eastern seaboard, would filmmakers go to the desert outside Hollywood to make films? It was because they were escaping the copyright rules of the day. They could not make movies in the eastern United States because Edison controlled the copyright on the camera. However, there was not the same copyright rules in California, so Hollywood was the original pirate bay.

It went on through the years when the VHS came out. Jack Valenti, the defender of the Hollywood industry, called the VHS the Boston strangler of movies and begged Congress to shut it down, to make it illegal because VHS was a threat.

The big pirate company at that time was Sony, which is suing people all over the planet for corporate infringement now, because it had created the VHS player with the record button.

At that time there was a big corporate fight and everybody said that the VHS would destroy Hollywood. However, as you know, Madam Speaker, and you are very young but you were probably right in your prime when the VHS came out, people started to rent movies, something they would never have thought about before because they would go to the theatre. Now they were able to rent movies, so this pirate activity, which Hollywood tried to shut down, became such a lucrative new business that it did not have to bother releasing movies to theatres. It could just release it to VHS and eventually on to DVD.

**Mr. Scott Andrews:** The Beta player.

**Mr. Charlie Angus:** Yes, the Beta player and how it was shut down. I ask the hon. member not to intervene in this until we talk about the Beta player.



*Government Orders*

Let us look at the recording business. In 1906 the musicians in the United States tried to make the roller piano illegal. They thought the roller piano would make it irrelevant to hire musicians so they said that mechanical music was a threat to musicians. Who did not side with them? The American Music Publishers Association did not support the musicians. It figured the more roller pianos sold, the more copyright it would make on the actual sheet music. Therefore, the roller piano was made legal. In the 1920s the recording industry tried to shut down radio because radio was not paying royalties. In each area along the way the problem was the need to find a monetization stream.

• (1120)

The fight in the digital age is no different than it was in 1928 when the royalties of artists dropped over 80% in the recording business because radio was the Napster of the day. It found a monetization stream. We are asking the government to work with us on a monetization stream for artists and unless we find that, we will be at the copyright wars for decades to come.

**Hon. Geoff Regan (Halifax West, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, I enjoyed my hon. colleague's line that suing dead people is a dead end.

[Translation]

He spoke about digital locks. With this bill, the government wants to impose a system on Canadians that is stricter than the systems in the United States or the United Kingdom. I find that troubling.

• (1125)

[English]

He also talked about the loss of the collector for royalty rights. Would he speak further about the impact on artists of the locks and what his solution to that would be?

**Mr. Charlie Angus:** Madam Speaker, it is interesting that the Conservative government has even tried to outdo the United States in terms of the digital lock provisions. The digital lock provisions under the DMCA have been reviewed in court. It has found that American citizens do have the right to extract works under certain circumstances.

However, what is also interesting is that we are being fed this fiction by the Conservatives that the music and film industries, that everything will come back if we make digital locks sacrosanct, but we have not seen that in any other jurisdiction. The need to create a monetization stream for artists remains. A digital lock is not a business model. It can be part of a business model, but it is not one in itself. The digital lock cannot replace the remuneration rights of artists.

Let us talk about where the government is attacking collective licensing rights.

Canada created one of the great compromises in the 1980s and 1990s with the private copying regime. It put a small amount of money on every copy, on tapes and then later on CDs that went into a fund for artists because we recognized that people were copying and artists needed some form of royalty. That created a royalty revenue of \$25 million to \$30 million a year for Canadian artists. That is not chump change, not in the kind of industry we are in right now, where the recording industry has suffered time and time again

and artists can count on those royalties. We have done away with extending the private copying levy to the digital realm. We have attacked the mechanical royalties which are \$8 million to \$12 million a year. Again, that is serious money for Canadian artists.

It is bizarre that a government would announce a right that existed defined by the Copyright Board no longer exists. Artists do not have a right to get paid for their work, end of story, live with the digital locks. That is not a reasonable solution for Canadian artists.

**Mr. Glenn Thibeault (Sudbury, NDP):** Madam Speaker, I thank my hon. colleague from Timmins—James Bay for his tireless work on this file. One of the things that my colleague and I share is we both come from northern Ontario. In my riding Laurentian University, Cambrian College and Collège Boréal provide distance education throughout the north. I know my colleague's riding is the size of Great Britain and Northern College also has to provide distance education to our communities throughout the north.

Digital locks and their impacts on the education component are worrying for those of us who happen to live in northern parts of Ontario, Alberta, Saskatchewan or Quebec. Would the hon. member comment on how the potential of digital locks on the education component will affect northern and rural communities?

**Mr. Charlie Angus:** Madam Speaker, what is not said here is the obligation, as an example, that Collège Boréal, in terms of doing outreach to small, isolated francophone communities in northern Ontario, will need to put a digital lock on its lessons. How will it go to Raymore, or Moonbeam, or Elk Lake and kick down the doors of the students, pull out their notes and ensure they are burned at the end of the class? There needs to be this in the digital realm. Schools will have to put locks on lessons.

We would be telling northern colleges that are serving communities like the Cree communities of the James Bay area or the isolated Franco-Ontarian communities that before they even get to teaching the students long distance learning, they will have to be locks on everything that makes lessons go up in smoke after 30 days. That will make it very difficult to administer long-term education long distance.

It is also the same problem that libraries are facing by insisting that they put on digital locks. It is easy for Warner Bros. to put on digital locks, but it is not so easy for a small northern library or college that wants to share in the incredible potential of education. Therefore, the digital lock provisions are regressive. They are not 21st century models. I do not even know if they are 19th century models.

**Hon. Lynne Yelich (Minister of State (Western Economic Diversification), CPC):** Madam Speaker, the Canadian Anti-Counterfeiting Network congratulated the government for protecting copyright holders. It said:

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We're pleased that the government is committed to getting tough on IP crimes... Piracy is a massive problem in Canada which has a tangible economic impact on government revenue, legitimate retailers, rights holders and consumers. It's extremely difficult for legitimate retailers to compete with those who...steal and rip [with no abandon].

The copyright modernization act recognizes that the most effective way to stop online infringement of copyright is to target those who enable and profit from the infringements of others. The new provision supplements the existing criminal punishments for those who aid and abet infringement.

Does the hon. member agree with the importance of ensuring that copyright owners are able to pursue the enablers in order to support the development of significant legitimate markets for downloading and streamlining in Canada?

● (1130)

**Mr. Charlie Angus:** Madam Speaker, that is a very interesting question. Certainly, the New Democratic Party has been very clear in our opposition that online piracy is undermining artists. However, I find it interesting that she talked about Canada as a piracy haven. It seems to be very similar language in the very recent WikiLeaks disclosure, that the then industry minister, now the notorious minister from Muskoka, actually met with U.S. officials and suggested it put Canada on the notorious 301 piracy watch list.

For those at home who do not know what the piracy watch list is, it is where North Korea and Yemen are put. Yet a representative of the Canadian government got it into his head that it would be a bright idea to tarnish Canada's international trade reputation by suggesting the United States put us on the international watch list of piracy terror states because it would help pass the bill. I find it staggering that we have a government that will not stand up to U.S. corporate interests and will not stand up for what Canada has done in dealing with piracy.

The former industry minister got it into his head that it was a bright idea to put us on this discredited watch list, despite the fact that the software retailers, and every other major international organization that watched the U.S. piracy watch list, said that it was absurd to put Canada on the list. It was probably as absurd as the same guy getting \$50 million in border infrastructure money and blowing it on gazebos in his riding. How did this guy get a job?

**Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP):** Madam Speaker, the hon. member for Timmins—James Bay has been a long champion on this issue. Perhaps in this session of Parliament we will see changes made to address the concerns.

The Minister of Canadian Heritage has told us he is open to change. I am certainly very concerned with the concerns of the Canadian Library Association that digital locks will impede its ability to use materials in the public interest.

Would the member for Timmins—James Bay agree with the library association that perhaps adding the words “for an infringing use” to qualify this requirement of a digital lock would have any effect in making the legislation less egregious?

**Mr. Charlie Angus:** Madam Speaker, certainly the position in the New Democratic Party is that the bill is highly problematic. However, we believe in updating the copyright regime and we believe it is possible with amending language.

For example, the concerns of Canadian librarians were not heard by the government, but it is possible to find amending language to ensure that we would differentiate between what would be done for infringing purposes and what would be done in order to allow people the education opportunities that exist in the digital realm. We saw it done with the other WIPO compliant countries.

If the government is not willing to come to those reasonable balanced compromises, then Bill C-11 will not be balanced. It will be detrimental to Canadian artists, consumers, students and educators.

We are more than willing to bring forward the amending language that will fix the problems of the bill. The problems are many, but they can be fixed. What it will take is whether there is good will on the part of the government to step back a bit and say that it has come so far down the road, that it did not get it right, so we should work together. It is not in the interests of the Canadian Parliament to delay copyright legislation. It is not in the interests of Canadian Parliament not to move forward with copyright. However, it is definitely not in the interests of the Canadian Parliament to move forward with a bill that is fundamentally flawed.

**Hon. Geoff Regan (Halifax West, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, I am very pleased and honoured to stand today in this debate on Bill C-11 on behalf of the Liberal Party and on behalf of my constituents in the great riding of Halifax West.

It is disappointing that the Minister of Industry and the Minister of Canadian Heritage and Official Languages do not appear to be interested in listening to this debate.

What we see in Bill C-11 is, as Yogi Berra said, “This is like déjà vu all over again”. In fact, this reminds of another Yogi Berraism. When he was asked about going to Coney Island, he said, “Nobody goes there anymore. It's too crowded”.

This is the same kind of logic that we find in the government's approach to this bill. The new copyright bill, Bill C-11, is a carbon copy of the old copyright bill, Bill C-32. It has the same ideologically driven principles and it has the same flaws and omissions. It has the same, as my hon. colleague from Timmins—James Bay was just saying, American-influenced digital lock provisions.

However, the Liberals recognize that there is a need to modernize the Copyright Act. We also recognize the need to protect artists, creators, educators and consumers. We recognize the need for balanced legislation. We think it is important to have copyright rules that are fair and balanced.

Instead of that, today we have before us a recycled bill that includes some of the most restrictive digital lock provisions in the world. This is, in fact, an approach that Michael Geist, who is the Canada Research Chair of Internet and E-commerce Law at the University of Ottawa, correctly points out is all about satisfying U.S. interests.

I was pleased to see this morning that he actually wrote on his blog today. He states:



The Liberal position is consistent with Bill C-60, their 2005 copyright bill that linked the digital lock rules to actual copyright infringement and did not establish a ban on the tools that can be used to circumvent digital locks.

Clearly, this renowned expert on copyright, the Internet and e-commerce is consistent in saying that our approach is one that makes sense and is consistent.

In view of those concerns, the Liberal Party will not support Bill C-11. The digital lock provisions in this bill are far too strict and they override virtually every other right that is in the legislation.

These provisions, for example, make it illegal for a mom to move a movie from her DVD to her iPad or Playbook so that her kids can watch it during a long car trip.

• (1135)

[Translation]

These provisions will make it illegal for Canadians to transfer a movie from a DVD to their iPad or PlayBook so that their kids can watch it during a long car trip, because bypassing the DVD protection measures would lead to a \$5,000 lawsuit. That is appalling.

[English]

I will take the case of a visually impaired student. If that student needs to shift the format of a digital text so he can read it but finds protection measures on the source material, he would not be able to read it unless he breaks the law. How can that possibly be considered a fair and balanced approach? In fact, it is the opposite of fair and balanced.

I know many of my colleagues across the way do not believe their tough on crime agenda means going after busy moms or students with disabilities, but they should actually consider the implications of this bill because that is exactly what they are doing with this bill.

This morning, the Minister of Canadian Heritage and Official Languages actually claimed that he and the government have the support of the Council of Ministers of Education Canada for the this bill. However, this is what the council actually said, "Much like many other education groups, provincial ministers agree that the digital lock provisions are too restrictive".

The minister seems to interpret that as support, which is a strange interpretation in my view.

The Liberals are strongly opposed to a government that seeks to make it illegal for ordinary Canadians to exercise their rights to view material they have legally purchased in the format they choose. This is about whether people can change something. If people have a CD they have paid for and they want to transfer the music from their CD to their iPod or, perhaps, to their BlackBerry, they want the ability to do that. What the government is saying is that they can do that. It wants Canadians to believe they can do that. However, the government is also saying that it is giving us that right but that it is taking it away because it has put a digital lock on it and we cannot. It is a contradictory position.

## Government Orders

• (1140)

[Translation]

Other countries have managed to fulfill their international WIPO treaty obligations without having to implement such strict digital lock provisions. So why would Canada go well beyond what is expected of it? The answer is clear. This bill was drafted for the purpose of meeting the demands of the United States instead of meeting the needs of Canadians and standing up for their interests.

[English]

Diplomatic cables, recently released through WikiLeaks, have revealed that much of the bill was drafted specifically to meet American expectations in terms of the digital lock provisions. I find that quite shocking and disturbing. It is not about what is in the interests of Canadians but what is in the interest of some U.S. interests. The Conservatives even offered to provide the United States government with an advance copy of the bill before the Parliament of Canada was allowed to read it.

**Hon. Judy Sgro:** Shame.

Hon. Geoff Regan: That is shameful. It is hard to imagine that could happen. Surely, the Conservatives would have more respect for Parliament and for the House of Commons than to offer it to a foreign government before tabling it here and making it available for members and for Canadians to examine.

Worse than that, the cables revealed that the Conservatives actually asked the United States to place Canada on the United States trade representatives' piracy watch list. They wanted to scare Canadians into supporting this copyright bill. Talk about a regressive, recidivist, bizarre way to approach this. Ten days after the Conservatives made the request, the U.S. was only too happy to oblige them. Naturally. It is no surprise that they went along fully.

The irony of all this, of course, is that the U.S. is now loosening up its own provisions on digital locks. During the last review of the American circumvention rules, it significantly loosened them up. While it is now legal in the U.S. to circumvent a protection measure to create a mash-up for YouTube, in Canada it is going to be illegal, thanks to the government. Can anyone imagine that? The Conservatives talk about this being balanced, fair and a modern copyright law. This is regressive.

While the Bush White House had a direct line into the Prime Minister's Office, the opinions and advice of Canadian stakeholders, Canadian citizens and Canadian experts fell on deaf ears.

During the 40th Parliament, a special legislative committee on the copyright bill heard from 142 witnesses and it received 167 submissions. That is a lot of input. As members of Parliament, we also received comments from thousands of Canadians. In fact, yesterday alone, my office received nearly 3,000 emails on this one subject. Canadians are concerned about this and have made lots of comments but the government is not listening.

### *Government Orders*

Much of what the committee heard last winter and spring made a lot of sense. Instead of listening, instead of saying that they heard what the witnesses were saying and that they would make some changes, the Conservatives chose to table the exact same bill with the identical wording. There was not a comma change, a period change or a letter moved in the bill except for perhaps the numbering now because it is a new Parliament.

The heritage minister has said publicly that he will not accept any changes. Today, he seems to be singing a bit of a different tune but we will have to wait and see if that is true. His handlers in the Prime Minister's Office have let it be known that they do not even want full hearings on the bill. They do not want members of the House, many of whom are new to the House, to hear from different witnesses and to have the opportunity for a full debate on the bill. I hope not, but perhaps we can expect to see today what we have seen in the last few weeks from the government on every major bill so far, and that is it using closure to move it quickly forward and to ram it through the House. Because of this heavy-handed approach, the undue American influence and the government's unyielding and misguided stance on digital locks, the Liberals have no choice, in our view, but to vote against Bill C-11.

A central concern heard at previous committee hearings was how the expansion of fair dealing into areas such as education would affect artists and creators. Many authors explained repeatedly that the changes in the bill would significantly affect their business models, and that is an important concern for us. However, in Bill C-11 we see no attempt to improve the definitions of fair dealing or provide any kind of certainty to these authors.

• (1145)

Finally, the Liberal Party continues to believe that artists and creators deserve transitional funding in order to cope with the effects this bill would have on their revenue streams. For instance, by no longer allowing creators to charge for ephemeral recordings, artists will lose a revenue stream of roughly \$8 million a year. We believe the government should provide some transitional assistance to help artists adjust to the new reality. That is why we proposed in the last election a fund to compensate artists.

Many members will be aware that in the past there was a levy on blank cassettes and CDs. At one point that levy was producing revenue of \$27.7 million for Canadian artists, and that was a very important revenue stream for them. Unfortunately, over time things change and people are not using as many cassettes or that many blank CDs and, therefore, the revenue has gone down to about \$8.8 million a year. That is a dramatic drop for the artists who were relying on that. It seems to me that the government ought to be recognizing this and trying to find a way to respond to it, but it does not seem interested. It does not seem to have any concern for the impact this is having and we should be concerned.

As a result of the many problems in the bill, particularly the fact that the government has demonstrated that, after hearing 142 witnesses, reading 163 submissions and hearing from thousands of Canadians commenting on it online, in emails and so forth, it does not feel the need for any changes whatsoever, I want to bring forward the following amendment. I move:

That the motion be amended by deleting all of the words after the word "That" and submitting the following:

"this House declines to give second reading to Bill C-11, An Act to amend the Copyright Act, because it fails to:

(a) uphold the rights of consumers to choose how to enjoy the content that they purchase through overly-restrictive digital lock provisions;

(b) include a clear and strict test for "fair dealing" for education purposes; and

(c) provide any transitional funding to help artists adapt to the loss of revenue streams that the Bill would cause.

**The Deputy Speaker:** The amendment is in order.

Questions and comments. The hon. Minister of State for Western Economic Diversification.

• (1150)

**Hon. Lynne Yelich (Minister of State (Western Economic Diversification), CPC):** Madam Speaker, I want to comment on a setback if we do not pass this bill to modernize our legislation.

The Liberals want to concentrate on how important it is to modernize the law but they are not paying attention to some of the good things the bill would accomplish. For example, the bill would legalize the export of works by an author or a Canadian citizen of the country of import and would be subject to payment of royalty that may be set out in the regulations. Does the member support this provision that would pertain to the export of materials adapted for the perceptually disabled, including Braille and audio books? The member had talked about how this would not help the disabled community. This particular bill addresses areas of Braille and the perceptually disabled.

Did the member say that he had received 3,000 emails in one day on this particular issue? What part of the bill did those 3,000 people specifically zero in on? I would like clarification on the 3,000 in one day, please.

**Hon. Geoff Regan:** Madam Speaker, I appreciate the hon. minister's question about the number of emails. I do not know how quickly she reads but I have not had the time to read all those emails to be able to tell her what aspects of the bill each one is dealing with. However, I can say that there was massive opposition. Yesterday my office received 2,900 emails on this topic, and the vast majority of them were opposed to the bill and opposed to the government's position on the bill. It is a remarkable number but it shows the kind of interest there is in this bill.

We have had so much input on this we would have thought that a government that wanted to hear about the bill, that was open to change, open to considering ways to improve the bill would have listened to some of those comments and adopted some changes in the bill it brought forward. We do not see that.



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The Conservatives claim there are good things, but virtually anything good they have done here is ruined by the fact that digital locks apply to them and people cannot get at them.

[Translation]

**Ms. Hélène LeBlanc (LaSalle—Émard, NDP):** Madam Speaker, I would like to thank the hon. member for his speech. I have the pleasure of serving with him on the Standing Committee on Industry, Science and Technology, which, of course, studies science and technology.

I would like to know if the hon. member feels that the bill before us considers technological advances, and all the new technologies that are popping up and evolving every day. Does he feel that this bill addresses the rapid evolution of the technologies currently used to disseminate culture and all the elements covered by this bill?

**Hon. Geoff Regan:** Madam Speaker, I would like to thank the hon. member, with whom I am pleased to serve on the Standing Committee on Industry, Science and Technology.

Many technological advances have had an impact on copyright; therefore, it is necessary to create a new bill and make some changes. However, what we are seeing in the bill before us today is that the government has not accepted or does not truly recognize the changes that give people a variety of ways to do things nowadays.

For example, as I have already said, a mother may want to transfer a movie from a DVD to her PlayBook or iPad so that her children can watch it during a long trip. But under this bill she cannot do that.

That example shows me that the government does not really recognize technological change or understand its implications.

• (1155)

[English]

**Hon. Lynne Yelich:** Madam Speaker, it still befuddles me, 3,000 emails in one day. I would like to help the member go through them because if there are 3,000 concerned people who are not writing to the rest of us on this, I would be quite curious to see what some of the concerns are. We have done many consultations and addressed many of the issues. I have not seen petitions with that many names. I find it very difficult to believe there were 3,000 people who wrote on that particular item.

**Hon. Geoff Regan:** Madam Speaker, if the member wants to come to my office we can talk about this and she can talk to my staff. I would suggest, rather than do that, she might want to talk to the Minister of Industry and the Minister of Canadian Heritage who also received most of these emails; in most cases, I was copied on the messages to them.

**An hon. member:** That is an issue of copyright.

**Hon. Geoff Regan:** Madam Speaker, someone mentioned that is an issue of copyright. My hon. friend from Windsor is joking about that, of course.

The member may want to check with the offices of those ministers. If the ministers are not aware of the emails that have been received, perhaps she should talk to their staff. I think she will find there has been a huge number of emails. Perhaps they have received more than I have. It would not surprise me.

**Mr. Brian Masse (Windsor West, NDP):** Madam Speaker, I have known the member for many years and I believe the veracity of his receiving those emails. I do not understand why it is that important anyway in the sense of asking a question. However, it is important to talk about the issue of long-distance learning.

I used to work on behalf of persons with disabilities. Regarding the learning supports they require, I am very worried that people would have to burn their notes and their programs after 30 days. People with a learning disability review their work time after time to ensure that the lesson has been instilled and that they do not forget it. Even an ordinary person would do that, but for those with a special learning disability it might take extra effort. I would like my colleague to reflect on that.

I have a real problem with this. I think it is a person's right to be able to get the education and reuse it for the rest of his or her life. It is called lifelong learning. I know that the Conservatives do not really believe in that, but many people in Canada do. This is a very important issue that people with disabilities will have to deal with.

**Hon. Geoff Regan:** Madam Speaker, in fact, as the hon. member will see in the motion we put forward, one of the areas we address is education. One of the things I talked about was people with disabilities.

I gave a similar example of a young person who perhaps is visually impaired. Under this law, that person would not be permitted to transfer a text into a format he or she could read because that would require the person to circumvent a digital lock. The government would fine the person for doing that. Someone could be fined \$5,000 under the bill for doing that.

Does that make sense? Is that a way to go forward in education? I think not.

**Mr. Mike Lake (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Industry, CPC):** Madam Speaker, I just have a comment.

First of all, that is completely incorrect. There is an exception to the digital lock provisions as they relate to people with perceptual disabilities. The hon. member may want to actually read the legislation.

I want to read a quote from a senior Liberal and I would like the hon. member's feedback on it. John Manley said that overall, the "copyright modernization act reflects an appropriate balance among the needs of creators, distributors, consumers and society as a whole, and for that reason, I encourage members of Parliament to move forward with it as expeditiously as possible."

**Hon. Geoff Regan:** Madam Speaker, I appreciate the quote and the point my hon. colleague has made on the question of what happens to digital locks for people with disabilities. I certainly look forward to the discussion in committee on this, if the bill gets there. My hope is that it will not. In fact, I think this bill is fundamentally flawed and I disagree with those who feel otherwise.

*Government Orders*

Of course, when someone speaks on behalf of his or her organization, I would not be surprised that the person would take a certain point of view, as Mr. Manley has done in speaking on behalf of his organization. It reminds me of what we see from the Conservative MPs generally who tend to speak only the words they are given to speak by the Prime Minister's Office and stay very close to the party line.

• (1200)

[Translation]

**Mr. Pierre Dionne Labelle (Rivière-du-Nord, NDP):** Madam Speaker, here we have another bill to modernize copyright, the same bill that was introduced by the industry minister on June 2, 2010. The short title of the bill is the Copyright Modernization Act, but I do not think this is the right title; it should have been called the digital lock act or the padlock act, based on what happened in the past.

It was about time that the government introduced, in legislation, the principles contained in the WIPO Copyright Treaty and the WIPO Performances and Phonograms Treaty, which Canada signed on December 22, 1997. Unfortunately, the Conservative government used this as an opportunity to include several provisions that undermine the foundation of copyright. The Copyright Act is the legal foundation that ensures that creations can be reproduced, presented and communicated to the public while guaranteeing proper compensation for their creators.

The people most overlooked by this digital lock legislation—which is being passed off as copyright legislation—are the creators. To weaken copyright by creating a series of exceptions that allow people to use creations without authorization or any financial compensation is tantamount to preventing a group of workers from earning a living from their trade. I will talk later about the financial repercussions of this bill's provisions on creators.

This bill also does away with collectives, a tool that artists created for themselves to facilitate access to their creations in full compliance with their rights. It also jeopardizes cultural industries by cutting off their supply of creations and by preventing them from developing markets that meet the needs of consumers while protecting their investments.

The bill contains over 40 new exceptions, most of which mean no compensation for creators, and this flies in the face of a fundamental principle, specifically, that as soon as a creation is used, there is no reason the creator should not be paid. It is simple; it is clear. That is the basis of copyright.

A royalty is not a tax. Since the start of this debate, the Conservatives have been trying to make the link between royalties and taxes. They are not the same thing. Every industry, to varying degrees, benefits from government assistance through investment, research and development tax credits, and also direct subsidies. Just look at the aerospace, agri-food and information technology industries, to name a few.

Cultural industries are no different. All these industries fiercely protect their intellectual property under the Patent Act, the Industrial Design Act, the Copyright Act or any other intellectual property protection legislation.

What ends up happening? Everyone, as taxpayers or consumers, pays for using the creations of these companies, whether we are talking about software, drugs or iPods, since royalties are included in the price of the product or the price of the software licence, for example.

What is wrong with paying royalties for using music, images, videos and books? The creators of that material are entitled to compensation, just as teachers are entitled to their salary and the mason who repairs the school wall is entitled to his pay.

It is not a tax; it is a royalty we pay to the copyright holder, as we do for many creators in a number of different fields. With all the new technology at our disposal, we have to stop thinking of ourselves simply as consumers of the creation of others. If we write a short story or a novel, compose a song or invent something, we would obviously like to receive fair payment for our creation, our work.

Creators are inventors. They have patents on their creations and are entitled to their fair share. That is why we have to “think different”, in the words of the famous Apple slogan. Let us hope this slogan inspires us to follow through.

• (1205)

I will quickly go over the provisions of this bill and the various exceptions discussed—there are about 40—which will deprive creators, artists, composers, musicians and photographers of the royalties to which they are entitled. I should also mention writers.

What is the significance of broadening the concept of fair dealing for the purpose of education, parody or satire? This will obviously go before the courts. They will have to define the scope of this section. In the meantime, uncertainty will persist and users, especially teachers, as well as copyright holders, will wonder about permitted uses. I already said in another presentation that, with the arrival of the majority Conservative government, with the building of new prisons, these Conservatives will invent new crimes to fill their prisons. There are several new crimes in this bill. We did not know they were crimes, but now we have punishments. Things we do on a daily basis will be criminalized and punished.



This provision affects monies collected by the Société québécoise de gestion collective des droits de reproduction—Copibec; the Society for Reproduction Rights of Authors, Composers and Publishers in Canada; and the Quebec Collective Society for the Rights of Makers of Sound and Video Recordings. All these organizations appeared before the committee, but the government did not use anything from their presentations. Instead, the government decided to borrow from provisions implemented in the United States. The Society of Composers, Authors and Music Publishers of Canada, or SOCAN, and the Société québécoise des auteurs dramatiques are also opposed to this provision, as are the Producers' Audiovisual Collective of Canada, Audio Ciné Films and Criterion Pictures when it comes to the reproduction of literary, artistic, dramatic, musical and audiovisual works, the public performance of musical and audiovisual works, and the presentation of dramatic works in educational institutions.

What about lost royalties in Quebec because of the broadening of the concept of fair dealing? In fact, what is fair dealing? The law does not specify what is meant by fair dealing. This will result in the loss of \$11 million annually for creators and copyright owners. Every year schools, CEGEPs and universities make 175 million copies of excerpts from protected works.

Let us remember that fair dealing is a loose concept that will put an end to the right to grant or deny authorization to use a work and the right to receive remuneration for the use of a work, thus affecting the rights of 23,000 authors and 1,000 publishers in Quebec.

The Conservatives are opening Pandora's box. The education sector is very large. It does not make any sense. If people can photocopy books for educational purposes without providing compensation, no one will want to write books. Furthermore, since the term "education" is not defined in the bill, this new exception could apply to any sort of educational activity and not just to activities carried out within the school system.

Another exception is reproduction for private purposes. An individual may reproduce a legally obtained work on any medium or device and provide access for private purposes. The government could have chosen, as the artists and performers have requested, to expand the existing compensation system for transferring a sound recording to blank media such as cassettes, but it chose to make it free.

We know that, right now, when we make a copy of a work on a disk, royalties are paid to the creators—29¢ on each CD, for example. Obviously, with the growth in virtual storage methods, the revenue from royalties has disappeared like snow on a warm day, dropping from \$27 million to \$8 million in a few years. There is nothing in this bill to compensate for these losses.

• (1210)

Creators are dismayed to see, in a copyright bill, that the only thing the government is concerned about recognizing is not copyright, but digital locks. The number of blank cassettes and DVDs sold is declining steadily, the amounts redistributed to creators are falling, and creators' associations are hoping that a similar royalty will be applied to the purchase of devices like personal stereos, as was said in committee, based on the size of the hard drive or flash memory. The existing private copying regime

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does not affect those devices, however; only the recording media. And fewer and fewer media are being used.

The use of photographs is another exception that has been criticized by photographic artists. An individual may use for private or non-commercial purposes, or permit the use of for those purposes, a photograph or portrait that was commissioned by the individual for personal purposes and made for valuable consideration, unless the individual and the owner of the copyright in the photograph or portrait have agreed otherwise.

On the question of later viewing, an individual may reproduce a work that is being broadcast for the purpose of listening to or viewing it later. Only one copy may be made and the individual may not keep the recording any longer than is reasonably necessary in order to listen to or view it later.

To summarize, I make a copy of a recorded program that I have paid for in order to watch it later, but I would not be entitled to retain the copy any longer than is necessary for the later use. How can that be verified, and who is going to do it? Who is going to make sure that I do not keep the copy indefinitely or I do not lend it to my neighbours? If I lend it to my neighbour, is that going to be a crime liable to a \$5,000 fine? If I look at the criminal provisions in the bill, that might well be the case. I would become a criminal if I lent a program to one of my friends. I think the penalty applied to this type of conduct is excessive in the circumstances.

With respect to backup copies, the owner of a work will be able to make backup copies and use them to replace an original work rendered unusable. Devices that can no longer be used will therefore have to be repurchased, but not the content.

There are some odd things in this bill. It is difficult to make head or tail of it.

With respect to communication of a work by telecommunication, educational institutions will be able to communicate lessons containing copyrighted works to students by telecommunication. The institution will have to take measures "that can reasonably be expected" to limit the distribution of the work and will also have to destroy the copy within 30 days of the date on which the students receive their final evaluations. However, no penalties are proposed if the institution fails to take the necessary measures.

This provision suffers from a somewhat split personality. It is sending the message that these works must be destroyed but there is no arrangement for verifying this. In any event, if it is not destroyed, that is no penalty. I wonder what we are talking about. I would really like to know what firm of lobbyists went to see the Conservative government and asked it to include this kind of provision in the bill. I do not understand.

For extension of the photocopy licence, institutions that have been issued a photocopying licence by Copibec will be able to make digital copies and communicate them to students by telecommunication. The photocopying licence's provisions will apply to that type of use, and the royalties will be calculated the same way. How will fair dealing for educational purposes be reconciled with this exception?

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Institutions in possession of a photocopying or reprographic licence will also be able to make digital reproductions and transmit them by telecommunication. Paid-for photocopies could thus be transmitted by way of digital reproduction, however they get somewhat lost in the maze that is the digital world.

• (1215)

Teaching institutions will be able to access works available on the Internet for educational purposes. We all do this: we use Google, we consult Wikipedia, etc. This exception would not apply to works protected by a technical measure—a lock—or to works displaying not simply the copyright symbol but also a clearly visible warning prohibiting their use. Thus, the principle whereby works are protected as soon as they exist in some medium, without the need for any other formality is reversed, and rights holders who do not wish to provide free access to their works would be forced to lock them or attach a warning. This fails to take into account the millions of works already available free of charge for educational purposes on the Internet under the current licensing system.

As far as reproduction for visual presentations and examinations is concerned, the current legislation permits the reproduction of a work by hand and its presentation by means of an overhead projector. The bill will authorize the reproduction and visual presentation of a work on all platforms irrespective of the type of technology, be it a USB key, an interactive whiteboard, or a computer screen. This exception will not apply if the work is available on the Canadian market in the medium in question. The legislator has removed the possibility of obtaining a licence from a collective society in order to stop the use of this exception. This amounts to an immediate loss of half a million dollars to the copyright holders represented by Copibec.

This is another example of a provision in this bill that does not assist authors but rather deprives them of up to \$500,000 in income.

We spoke earlier of provisions in the bill that apply to libraries, museums and archives. Let us see how this applies in the case of loans to institutions. Libraries, museums and archives designated as such under the act will henceforth be able to transmit digitally formatted articles from periodicals to users for private study and research purposes. These institutions must take steps to prevent the user from printing more than one copy of the article or from transmitting it to a third party.

Librarians who forward articles to users must take steps to ensure that these users are not able to transmit this information to a third party. As I cast my mind to my municipal library in St-Hippolyte, I wonder who will have to handle the directives this legislation entails. How will that person proceed?

In the culture sector, the general feeling about Bill C-11 is that, in its current form, it undermines the principles at the heart of copyright, principles that have historically provided an environment that is favourable to creators, producers, distributors and consumers of cultural property. This bill will compromise Canada's ability to compete in a global digital economy and will undermine the economic future of those creating Canadian content. Artists indicate that numerous clauses in Bill C-11 demonstrate a lack of understanding of the creative industry's structures within an evolving technological environment. Parliamentarians have a responsibility to amend the bill and keep the positive measures. In order to develop an

innovative knowledge economy, Canada needs to staunchly defend intellectual property.

If Bill C-11 is passed in its current form, there will be serious financial consequences for artists, for Canada's cultural industries, with losses estimated at \$126 million per year.

We should be removing all of the clauses that go against the current law and eliminate the revenue currently being generated. This includes the provisions that legalize certain kinds of copying, without providing any compensation. We must allow the educational use of copyrighted material without compensation.

It seems as though all of the attempts at copyright reform in Canada have had very little to do with creating a system that balances the rights of creators with those of the general public. That is what the NDP wants. We do not want to further criminalize the actions of individuals. We want this bill to clearly set out copyright guidelines for creators, to help them enter into a growing, evolving universe.

• (1220)

**Mrs. Anne-Marie Day (Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, Quebec's motto is, "Je me souviens" or "I remember". Personally, I remember the election that took place in 2008 and I remember the general outcry that was sounded in Quebec to protect and defend copyright. Quebec is the cradle of the French language in this country, and in order to protect copyright, Quebecers stepped up and raised an outcry.

With regard to digital locks, it is the distribution companies that will call the shots. In Canada, where Quebec is an enclave and where small communities of francophones live in the other provinces, is my colleague not concerned that these large corporations, these large companies, will stop distributing francophone creators who, as a result, will be removed from the information highway?

**Mr. Pierre Dionne Labelle:** Mr. Speaker, quite frankly, I cannot really predict the impact the implementation of these various measures and these digital locks would have on the distribution of works by Quebec's artists.

On the other hand, in another life, I had a few songs at the top of the charts in Quebec and I regularly received a cheque from SOCAN for my royalties. They were sometimes ridiculously tiny amounts, but they helped make ends meet nonetheless.

At present, what is known as "ephemeral recordings" are included in one of the provisions that constitute yet another exception in this bill. This provision is going to cost songwriters over \$7 million in royalties they would otherwise receive from the broadcasting of their songs over the radio. I think this provision is a slap in the face to all those who dedicate their lives to creativity and helping others see the beauty in this world.



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**Ms. Hélène LeBlanc (LaSalle—Émard, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague from Rivière-du-Nord for his speech and for the passion and enthusiasm he put into defending the creators of our culture. I would like to hear more on the previous question about how this bill does not take into account creators of culture and how culture is disseminated. Canada is a big country, but our creators are often not encouraged to disseminate Canadian and Quebec culture. How could this bill be detrimental to the dissemination of our culture?

**Mr. Pierre Dionne Labelle:** Mr. Speaker, we have been waiting for over 15 years for reforms to bring the Copyright Act in line with the digital age. What we have here is a bill that will cut the legs out from under many creators, and as a result, fewer people will be interested in creating works.

Eventually, we will have a harder time disseminating these works abroad. If copyrights are waived so that works can be reproduced in schools for the purpose of education or fair dealing, as we heard earlier, a whole bunch of authors will no longer want to write books. What motivation is there to write if anyone can reproduce excerpts from books without providing any compensation?

**Mr. Jamie Nicholls (Vaudreuil—Soulanges, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the hon. member for his speech. What does he believe are the most negative aspects of this bill? Can he summarize them?

• (1225)

**Mr. Pierre Dionne Labelle:** Mr. Speaker, the bill has some positive aspects, such as digital locks, which we do understand. We understand that companies that have invested in developing video games or movies want to protect their products by using this type of lock.

At the same time, what concerns me about this bill, is the nature of the fines that will be imposed on those who try to find the keys to these digital locks. I am convinced that young people, with their creativity and imagination, will succeed in bypassing the digital locks that are put on any products that they use.

More emphasis has been placed on the protection of industries than on a true copyright reform that would allow creators to receive financial compensation each time their works are used.

It is somewhere between these two visions. On one hand, there is legislation that takes a repressive approach to this issue and, on the other hand, there are creators who would have liked to use a legislative lever to allow for true thought on the definitions of a creator—the nature of a creator; copyright; and how to protect authors and artists and encourage them to create.

[English]

**Mr. Jamie Nicholls (Vaudreuil—Soulanges, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, no one can deny that Steve Jobs was an innovative thinker in the world of business. He gave innovation and business sophistication a face. He became an icon of the new economy. We have lost him but the innovations of his company, namely the universal digital machine, the personal computer, which members on both sides of the House depend upon for their daily work, remains with us. I doubt any member would argue that deep changes occurred in our society through the introduction of the personal computer in our daily lives.

My first introduction to computing was through my dad. He worked for a company called Control Data as a truck driver and he delivered the cardboard cards that kept the information on the federal government's computers in Ottawa. I used to draw on the backs of the cards that were thrown away, so maybe it was one of the first mash-ups or culture jamming that I did.

Then my dad brought home a tape recorder. We recorded our own stories on it and taped over bits that we did not like. It provided hours of humour listening to our own squeaky voices. Then we realized that maybe we could record stuff we heard on the radio and we listened to songs instead of waiting for them to come on the radio. We could sing to those songs and record at the same time. Our minds were thinking of all the possibilities that we could do with the technology that was put before us.

Around the same time that we were doing these goofy things, Mr. Jobs brought his Apple computers to the world. There was also at this time a lawsuit going on that my hon. colleague mentioned and it was the Betamax case.

We were not early adopters in my family so we did not have a VCR when it first came out. Apparently when the Betamax came out in 1976, the television industry was up in arms. When the VCR came out there were no video stores, no rentals, nothing, so, all we could really do with a VCR was record television shows. In effect it became the first time shifting device. Instead of sitting down when broadcasters dictated, we could choose our own time to watch things; that is, if we could program the device, which many people had difficulty doing, so it became the task of members of my generation to do it because our elders could not figure out how to do it.

Television broadcasters did not like this additional consumer control because they did not want consumers to have control. Their greatest fear was the loss of revenue due to people fast forwarding commercials and watching movies and television shows from their personal libraries instead of tuning in to the broadcaster's schedule. The VCR dictated the time that people could watch shows.

The theory of copyright laws is that they limit control over the use of content to the copyright owner. They leverage the right of copyright into revenue. People cannot use what the copyright owner owns unless they pay. The theory is that revenue creates incentive for the creation of new works.

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Broadcasters were worried about their revenue. Movie studios were incensed that consumers could record their movies. The sky would fall they said. They did not want VCR technology. They wanted a ban on it, so they filed a lawsuit against Sony, the maker of the Betamax. The studios wanted control over the design of the VCR. TV broadcasters and movie studios wanted certain recording features on the machine, like the recording button or the fast forward button, eliminated. I ask hon. members to imagine the VCR without a fast forward button or a record button, or let us consider for a second a world where the VCR was banned, which was the original intent of this lawsuit.

The reason why I mention all of this is because technology has evolved. People have to be active in the programming of their family lives. We need a more active population, a wider field of choice and possibilities. They have to have the idea that anything is possible because that is the foundation of innovation. I should remind members that innovation is precisely one of the greatest challenges and one of the greatest weaknesses in our Canadian economy right now.

Thankfully, in 1983 the U.S. supreme court decided that the VCR was a legal device. Years later the movie industry hailed the VCR as something great. The industry received huge profits from the sale of videos. The industry that had previously feared and misunderstood the VCR realized that it could get money from this new machine. It wanted to lock the march of progress at that time but realized that the VCR provided a monetized stream for it and it was no longer fearful of it.

• (1230)

When I was 20, I managed to get my hands on a video camera. I taped some of my surroundings, took my favourite REM CD, clipped some stuff from the TV, and put them all together using the VCR. It was not very good, admittedly. It was kind of clunky. However I had created something new, something that allowed my interpretation of the music. That action was something that has gone on for ages.

Troubadours in medieval times would take words of songs and change them. Tellers of oral tales would change elements of the story to suit their local cultures. In our times we have groups like Negativland and DJ Danger Mouse, amongst others that do essentially the same thing.

This legislation would try to make this activity illegal. Unlocking the digital lock, something that a young Norwegian did to DVD encryption in the last decade would become a crime.

The 1998 law that the U.S.A. brought in, the DMCA, was found to be unenforceable. Basically this could not be enforced. It is too hard.

The greater problem here is that we have a digital age and a universal digital machine. All the information that we have nowadays, music, movies, text, is all in digital form now. When it is brought into a digital machine, it all gets translated into the same form of information. There is an innovation that happens there when people interact with that.

All the information is digital, so to be truly effective, to protect the copyright owner as this bill tries to do, one would effectively have to

control computers. It is this idea that the U.S. tried to do. It tried to develop this idea of the Fritz chip. Every digital device would have this chip that would lock certain activities on that device. However, computer scientists have said this is impossible, that they would not be able to invent something like that.

Basically, a universal machine, a personal computer, would have to be turned into a somewhat limited machine. The effect of that, of course, would be to limit the innovation that we use these machines for.

There are also questions in legal circles about the provisions in this legislation that say that perhaps these are not measures that would fall under a copyright act, they would fall under ideas of property or civil rights, which are a provincial jurisdiction.

To finish off my discourse, I would like to state 12 reasons why our copyright laws are already strong enough and do not require any renewing to protect the copyright owners.

Number one, Canada has about 36 copyright collectives, many of which have received substantial direct and indirect government subsidies. The U.S. has only about half a dozen with no government support. The U.S. is asking us to impose this legislation, and yet we already have stronger copyright legislation than the U.S. does.

Number two, Canada has a full-time Copyright Board which has normally had four full-time members plus a sitting or retired judge as chairman, currently about a dozen full-time professional and administrative staff. The board has enormous policy and effective law-making powers. No other country of which we are aware comes close to having such a large, permanent, powerful and full-time copyright tribunal.

Number three, broadcasters pay far more for copyright royalties than their counterparts in the U.S., much of it for rights that do not even exist in the U.S., for example, the ephemeral right. The U.S. provides an outright exemption in 17 U.S.C.112 for the ephemeral right.

About \$50 million a year more, over and above, is being demanded by a collective dominated by the American dominated record labels for this right, in addition to amounts now collected by composers, authors and publishers. Canada's Copyright Board heard a major case on commercial radio where this and other issues will be decided in December 2008 and January 2009. However, it will probably be at least 18 months to 2 years after the hearing before a decision is announced, based on the timing of some recent major decisions from the board.



• (1235)

Number four, the Canadian Copyright Board values each right under the Copyright Act brought before it separately with little regard to layering and multiplicity of the tariffs which result in effect for the same transaction. Whether this is an error in approach by the board and/or in policy and/or in legislative drafting is subject to fair debate. The fact is that the U.S. law goes to great lengths to avoid such a result as recent court decisions have confirmed.

Number five, educators pay far more for copyright clearance than their American counterparts pay. There is simply no mechanism in place in the U.S.A. analogous to the excessive \$5.16 per K-12 student or the excessive per student and course pack rates payable to access copyright for post-secondary students. There is a similar mechanism for Quebec. Canada's Copyright Board has pushed back on what it considers to be fair dealing in the classroom for what the Supreme Court of Canada arguably requires and American law clearly permits. The Copyright Board's controversial decision is currently under judicial review.

Number six, Access Copyright is trying to collect \$24 a year for each full-time employee in Canadian provincial and territorial governments, not including Quebec. This potentially would be a cost of \$6.5 million a year for Canadian taxpayers, which seems absurd in view of the Supreme Court of Canada's decision in *CCH Canadian Ltd. v. Law Society of Upper Canada*, since most, if not all, copying of protected material would likely be for research purposes. Nonetheless, a very expensive proceeding would slowly unfold before the Copyright Board and probably beyond into the courts. Even with an unusual push by the Copyright Board to get this moving, it would likely drag on for years.

Such a tariff or equivalent mechanism would never get off the ground in the U.S.A. for many reasons, including that state sovereign immunity is well established by the U.S. Supreme Court. There may very well be provincial crown immunity in Canada but to what extent it would be invoked is currently unclear. At any rate, this new attempted tariff by Access Copyright has no counterpart in the U.S. and is yet another situation in which U.S. copyright owners could prove to be better off in Canada than in their own country.

Number seven, Canadian law requires payment for certain educational uses that are explicitly exempted in the U.S.A., such as the performance of films in a classroom.

Number eight, Canada has no explicit statutory exception for the performance of music for the purpose of selling sound recordings or audiovisual equipment as is found in section 110(7) of the U.S. copyright law.

Number nine, Canadians pay large amounts to SOCAN and NRCC for performances in countless bars, restaurants, retail stores and other small business establishments. The U.S. notoriously exempts these establishments, contrary to a WTO section 110 ruling which the U.S. continues to flout. The U.S. is by far the leading adjudicated current violator of international copyright law.

I could cite more examples which I found online in a blog. I have shared the author's thoughts with the House on why our copyright laws are already stronger than those of the U.S. and yet we are

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getting pressure from multinationals to impose this law on Canadians when our law is already sufficiently strong.

With that I will conclude.

• (1240)

**Mr. Mike Lake (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Industry, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the new member for his speech. As a history lesson, this is the fourth time we have gone through this process as it relates to a copyright bill. Last time around we had 39 hours of testimony at committee during which time the NDP member on the committee repeatedly lobbied for a tax on iPods.

The Copyright Board in 2007 published a statement filed by the Canadian Private Copying Collective for levies it proposed to collect effective January 1, 2008. The proposal stated different rates, but the rate was \$75 for each recorder with more than 30 gigs of memory. That is where the \$75 iPod tax we often refer to comes from.

In the spring of 2010, the heritage committee, which was dominated by members of the opposition, passed a report that would extend the definition of audio recording medium to devices with internal memory so that the levy on copying music would apply to digital music recorders as well. On April 14 last year we had a vote in the House on that motion. Every member of the NDP, the Liberals and the Bloc supported the motion and every member of the Conservative Party opposed it.

I would like some clarity on where the member stands on the \$75 tax on iPods proposed by the Copyright Board but supported by the members of the opposition parties.

**Mr. Jamie Nicholls:** Mr. Speaker, as the member stated, I was not here at that time so I do not know all the details of what went on at committee. However, I have been informed by other members that the Conservative chair of that committee actually supported the legislation. I cannot speak to the details of that because I am not informed on that.

**Mr. Brian Masse (Windsor West, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, it is not surprising that the parliamentary secretary is trying to resurrect an old myth with regard to an iPod tax. We actually proposed that the Copyright Board would set a rate that would be good for the artist and fair for the consumer and to have that independent assessment done. We know the Conservatives have concerns over that. We have seen what they have done with other appointed officials in different departments. However, there certainly was no \$75 tax. The parliamentary secretary knows that.

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It is unfortunate because we have been trying to have a good debate about this issue in the House today and we have been participating in that. I know the parliamentary secretary was excluded from some of the unfortunate things that took place in the House, but we have been trying to press on having some compromise here.

Again, there was no suggestion of a \$75 tax.

**Mr. Jamie Nicholls:** Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my hon. colleagues for providing some of the history on this issue. As I said, I was not a member of the House so I was not privy to all the details. I have not looked at it in depth. I thank both members for informing me on the history of this legislation.

•(1245)

[Translation]

**Mrs. Anne-Marie Day (Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, the hon. member spoke about Steve Jobs. We could also talk about Facebook. What has made Facebook so popular is its democratic access; it is free and open to everyone. If there were no users, there would be no industry putting products on the market. I predict certain death for the cultural industry if we put locks on it. There is a limit to what our families are able to pay. They are already paying for Internet, telephone services, the information highway, television and anything they want to download, whether they are selling or purchasing cultural products.

Does the hon. member believe that using digital locks will be harmful to the cultural industry and the public's use of it?

**Mr. Jamie Nicholls:** Mr. Speaker, it will negatively affect people's participation in culture. The hon. member said that when technological locks are applied, new items have to be purchased every time the technology changes. In 1989, I bought a Bob Dylan record and, in the 1990s, I had to buy the same album on tape and then on CD. Buying something three times and never owning it affects cultural participation in a negative way.

[English]

**Mr. Mike Lake:** Mr. Speaker, I appreciated the intervention by the member for Windsor West on the matter of the iPod tax. He said that the Copyright Board should have the ability to set the rate. For clarification, as the debate was going on and the NDP consistently advocated for a tax on recording devices, including iPods, that may be extended to other things, in 2008 the Canadian Private Copying Collective which is responsible for this area put forward a proposal. It is published in the *Canada Gazette*:

—the Copyright Board hereby publishes the statement filed by the Canadian Private Copying Collective (CPCC) on January 31, 2007, with respect to the levies it proposes to collect, effective January 1, 2008, on the sale, in Canada, of blank audio recording media.

In the area marked "Levy", it states:

Subject to subsection (2), the levy rates shall be...

(e) for digital audio recorders, \$5 for each recorder with no more than 1 Gigabyte (GB) of memory, \$25 for each recorder with more than 1 GB and no more than 10 GB of memory, \$50 for each recorder with more than 10 GB and no more than 30 GB of memory, and \$75 for each recorder with more than 30 GB of memory.

That covers most iPods that people are purchasing today.

The member for Windsor West said that the Copyright Board should have the ability to set those levies. During most of the debate

on this, those were the numbers on the table in terms of what the Canadian Private Copying Collective had put forward.

I want to know whether the hon. member supports the member for Windsor West in saying that should be the way the iPod tax is handled.

**Mr. Jamie Nicholls:** Mr. Speaker, rather than engaging in a side debate, I would rather deal with what I actually addressed in my speech. I did not mention a tax. I just wanted to point out to members across that the copyright legislation that exists is stronger legislation than what the United States has and I have fears about this bill impeding innovation in Canada. Rather than getting into a side debate, I would prefer to address the issues that I mentioned in my speech.

•(1250)

**Mr. Mike Lake:** Mr. Speaker, it seems as though nobody on the other side wants to engage in the debate, so I will ask another question.

The member mentioned that he did not talk about taxes in his speech. The hon. member for Timmins—James Bay was on the committee during the 39 hours of testimony we heard from witnesses. Repeatedly the member for Timmins—James Bay advocated for a tax on iPods. We can call it a levy or whatever we want, but he advocated for that. I want to know if he agrees with the member for Timmins—James Bay, who will probably be taking the lead on this issue again.

**Mr. Jamie Nicholls:** Mr. Speaker, I would have to discuss the matter with the member for Timmins—James Bay before making any informed comments on that issue. I look forward to speaking with the member and getting information on that issue.

**Mr. Brian Masse (Windsor West, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure to speak to Bill C-11. Copyright is a very important issue and New Democrats have been talking about having a digital strategy in general, but I will get into the specifics.

It is interesting that the Conservatives referred to a former Liberal member, John Manley, as the benchmark of where they should be. I have nothing against John Manley; I served in the House of Commons with him. He was up front in terms of discussing issues. When we think of the advice the Conservatives are following, it is kind of interesting because John Manley was the person who wanted to deregulate our banks and make them like the U.S. banks. The Conservative government very often talks about how we have a strong financial system right now because we did not do what the U.S. did.

I was in the House of Commons when the Conservatives joined with John Manley to try to change our banks to be more like the U.S. banks. We had those debates in the House of Commons. I would give credit to the Bloc Québécois. The Bloc members were very staunchly against that, as were the New Democrats. We were able to defeat that. Judy Wasylycia-Leis was a key NDP member opposing that proposal. We made counter proposals to John Manley that were seen as hostile, left wing, socialist and crazy. Finally, after many months of pressure, we were able to defeat the movement by John Manley and the Conservatives at that time to deregulate our banks and make them more like the American banks. That was the argument at that point in time.



It is very important—

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bruce Stanton):** The hon. member for Bourassa is rising on a point of order.

[Translation]

**Hon. Denis Coderre:** Mr. Speaker, when we talk about a bill, we have to consider relevance. First, I do not think that this is relevant and, second, if Canada was saved from the recession, it is because we had an extraordinary prime minister, Jean Chrétien, who prevented the bank merger.

Let us stay on topic, please.

[English]

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bruce Stanton):** Certainly, the proper thing for members to do is to speak in terms relevant to the topic that is before us. I am sure the hon. member was getting to his point.

The hon. member for Windsor West.

**Mr. Brian Masse:** Mr. Speaker, I was. That is a type of Liberal infighting, a Chrétienite versus a Martinite, with regard to the Manley history. However, it is clear that this has been used as an example to validate this legislation.

I was about to raise other third-party concerns that have been voiced in the debate that Canadians should hear. One of them is from Dr. Michael Geist, a renowned technology commentator. He has been quoted on Bill C-11 as saying that the foundation principle of the new bill remains that any time a digital lock is used, whether on books, movies, music, or electronic devices, the lock trumps virtually all other rights. He also states:

This means that both the existing fair dealing rights and Bill [C-11]'s new rights all cease to function effectively so long as the rights holder places a digital lock on the content or device.

We have a significant problem with the digital lock and we believe that having this type of testimony makes things more balanced as it is not just from the users. Later on we will hear some quotes from the artists as well.

I have statements from the cultural industries, which represent over 80 arts and cultural organizations across Quebec and nationwide. They argue that the bill would be toxic to the digital economy and warn that it would be a failure of the entire act itself. They suggest that the bill is actually toxic to artists.

The Writers Guild of Canada has a different take regarding its interest on the bill. It is a complex bill and issue. It states:

They are neither forward-looking nor in consumers or creators' best interests. Digital locks, at their best, will simply freeze current revenue streams for creators.

There are other experts in the field, such as the Samuelson-Glushko Canadian Internet Policy and Public Interest Clinic. This is what it has to say on digital locks:

Overall, these digital lock provisions are some of the most restrictive in the world.

To achieve a fair balance between users and copyright owners, the government needs to fix the digital lock provisions before this bill passes into law.

That is another counter to the one extreme case being used regarding Mr. Manley and his interests that are represented.

The Society of Composers, Authors and Music Publishers of Canada, SOCAN for short, states:

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Without this balance, the creation of creative content will eventually decrease, as Canadian creators will be unable to make a living.

Presently, the average wage of a Canadian creator and artist is approximately \$12,000 a year. That is not sufficient and the bill would take away some of their actual earnings forthright. This is a very important issue for artists because in this economy they are certainly suffering quite significantly. On top of that, they have a history in Canada of not being the most compensated in the workforce despite the fact that billions of dollars are generated from this industry, which I believe is around 7% of the GDP in overall impact.

Mr. Howard Knopf, a copyright lawyer, states:

The Digital Locks (TPM) measures continue to divide Canadians and to defy consensus. [They] are stronger than required by the WIPO treaties and stronger than necessary—

Why does the bill appear to be going overboard regarding digital locks?

What can be brought to bear on this issue is pressure from the United States. It was interesting to see the former minister of industry suggest that we should actually leak an advance copy of our bill to the United States. What is intriguing in itself is that instead of sharing it with Canadians, the people he represented as the minister, he would leak a document to the United States in advance to more or less get the Americans' opinion or blessing.

Later on the former minister's ministerial aid, the member for Parry Sound—Muskoka, suggested that Canada be put on the United States' piracy watch list. This was also intriguing because I worked with the member for Edmonton—Leduc to improve Canada's international representation regarding piracy on a number of different visits since 2002 with the Canada-U.S. Parliamentary Association, which is a bipartisan group. We met with members of Congress and senators in the United States. We attended bilateral meetings. We went to different conferences across the United States to meet with Governors and different legislatures on a statewide and nationwide scale.

● (1255)

We often heard that the Hollywood movie industry was upset that Canadian films were allowed to be filmed in our studios or in our theatres. That was true. It was a grey area of the law and we had a problem with the filming and distribution of pirated movies. That was ratcheted up through the U.S. system and it gave us a black eye in many respects. To be fair, there was good evidence that in some specific places in Montreal and other theatres pirated versions emerged. They were being sold on the streets of New York and other places like that just as easily as in Canada but it became a problem.

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I am aware of the good work done by the member for Edmonton—Leduc as a representative. We were able to work in a group and make legal changes here in Canada to remove that problem. A lot of effort went into reversing the reputation that Canada had at that particular time with the United States. Therefore, I have difficulty understanding why the second removed former minister would suggest that we would leak a copy to the United States and that the aid for the previous minister, the member from Muskoka, would want Canada to be on the U.S. piracy list.

The member for Timmins—James Bay talked about some of the countries that are on that list. They are not countries like Canada. When we are working hard together on international relationships and trading partner issues, why would we want to subject ourselves to that type of behaviour? It shows that the government will buckle under pressure, as it has many other times, regarding U.S.-Canada government relations, which has subsequently cost Canadians.

This digital lock issue could cost Canadians. That is why we believe it is important to have a digital strategy. I will get to the digital strategy because it does affect us.

The devices we are using today which have changed so dramatically will continue to change in the future as well. It is not only about the types of devices and how they are used but also about how the content is shuffled from one device to another and the many ways in which it is used.

I have a Sony PlayStation. When I download a song I can use it on my PS3 but having it on my Playbook is a different problem altogether. When I buy a particular song I believe I should have the right to use it on both those devices. Therefore, it also involves the mechanics of moving the content around.

We often talk about net neutrality. Canada needs to take a moment to define "net neutrality". It is not only important for consumers and their use of different entertainment and other available devices but also for business, especially small business. In the past we have heard testimony on net neutrality with regard to throttling posing bigger challenges to some of the smaller companies' ability to stream, their access to streaming, as well as the value of streaming. We believe that net neutrality is important for consumers as well as businesses in the country.

We want a national strategy on broadband. It is very important. Many times we have seen companies focus on specific areas of development, such as the large urban areas where the costs are more beneficial than out in the suburbs and rural areas. We believe that in Canada it should be similar to our highway systems and other physical infrastructure which connects Canadians from coast to coast to coast and that we have that ability to communicate.

That is why the CBC is so important and we believe in it so strongly. In Windsor, where we are dominated by U.S. content and material, it is nice to hear stories from Prince Edward Island, Nova Scotia, the Yukon or British Columbia. We get that through a national broadcast structure that is important for keeping our national identity.

We also talk about having a strategy on the spectrum auction. The government ended up in court over the last spectrum auction. It is an important asset. The type of spectrum we are getting is significant

and would offer us a great advantage toward building this national infrastructure. However, we need to look at where the resources would come from. The last time the spectrum auction assets came in they were dumped into the central fund. We want to see a national strategy put in place that would take advantage of that and use it as an opportunity to put our broadband, and our society in general, in a better position. The U.S. is approximately two years ahead of us on this. It is an important point.

● (1300)

We do not know when the government will have the spectrum auction and the final terms. It is critical as it is affecting business decisions due to the uncertainty of how we would use and implement the different research, technology, communications, et cetera. We do not know exactly what will take place next and we need to catch up to the United States. Being that much behind the U.S. does not offer the same type of opportunities for investment because we are looking at that when making decisions.

It is similar to physical infrastructure. In my community we are finally working toward implementing a new border crossing. If the legislation passed in Michigan for that it would allow for better investment decisions to be made in Canada. Once it is developed and rolled out and we can see the physical asset, predictability can take place.

We also need to deal with the issue of e-commerce. We have heard testimony at the industry committee regarding Canada's e-commerce. It is a dog's breakfast. The other day we heard testimony that Canada is very much behind on e-commerce and that it is a disadvantage. We also heard testimony to the effect that we are not being treated the same as the United States and that Canadian companies are paying higher fees and charges. We should be looking at all of that.

These are the elements we have for looking at the new age because what we are dealing with today will change a lot.

Going back to Bill C-11, we are interested in getting it to committee to hear more testimony and we hope that the government will look at a couple of things.

I want to touch on the issues I believe are important.

There is a five year review of the bill. I have moved amendments on other bills, some of which have passed through the House of Commons, to have a three year review of a bill. Technology is changing so quickly and the artists are caught up in that. I have read a number of testimonies not only from people in commerce but also from artists stating that there will be a diminishment of Canadian content and remuneration going back to the artists themselves. We should not be leaving them in the lurch for five years. Perhaps we should be looking at a three year review.



*Government Orders*

One of the things that is very important about that review, and I am sure we will hear this debated, is whether or not the legislation can get out the door, get working and provide a proper analysis after five years. We need to research that. I think three years or some other provision for artists needs to be in there if we are to have the five year review because we are hearing enough testimony that there are problems.

I want to talk about long-distance education. For the most part, it pertains to rural areas. However, long-distance education is also taking place in cities because people are looking for specific degrees, specific information and specific areas of improvement. That is important because, as a competitive society, we have heard that Canadian education needs to be better and stronger.

I have a problem with the 30-day provision where the material would dissolve or we get to the old-fashioned book burning scenario where we have to destroy the product. I do not understand that. When we buy a product, we have that property.

I remember the days in university when we would try to sell our books because when the next edition came out it was a little bit different. That is an important point to make because I think there is some overcalculation here. Each year the book would change a little but we were made to buy the newest edition. I remember the days when only a bit of the content was different but we were forced to buy the new textbook because of the change.

I do not understand why we would want people to lose the education and training materials that they would pay for from their own pocket because of a 30-day cycle. It is very important. I know many professionals, doctors and other individuals who regularly refer to the material from which they learned.

I do that for my own research in the House of Commons. If we research a topic or have the research done by the Library of Parliament, I often review the material a number of times at different points in time. I do not know what advantage there would be for individuals to take college courses via long distance if they could not review the materials whenever and however they wanted.

• (1305)

We can research that some more to determine the exact veracity of that, how the definitions will be defined and who will control that. It will be interesting to hear testimony at the committee hearings.

I am a little bit cautious on that, because I have seen in the past, whether it be with fibromyalgia or other types of disabilities, where people have been denied certain support systems because the disability was not as so-called obvious as others, or there was no burden of proof, or there would be an extra expense to get doctor's notes or other types of learning support documents at different times. I am a little bit concerned about that.

I will wrap up on the important issue of royalty rights. The royalty rights are a stabilizing fund for our artists. There have been a lot of changes over the years to the types of materials that we have had and the way they get remuneration. It is a new world, a new age, which is why we have gone through several machinations of this bill. It has always created a problem because we are trying to find the right balance at the end of the day between the consumers and ensuring that our artists are compensated. It is tough because we all want to

have stuff but having it for free is just not fair for the people who have actually spent their time, energy and money creating it.

We want to have balance in there and stripping away the fund is something that I cannot accept. We need to have a solution for it. As I said, the annual average income for an artist in Canada is around \$12,000. That is not sufficient to live on in this day and age in our communities. We need to ensure we are going to compete.

It is very common to have great relations with the United States. I go over to the United States all the time. However, we are fiercely proud because we have Canadian content and we have that Canadian identity that is not only recognized by the people in the United States but is celebrated by them, too. We push back into their content with the great artists, the men and women we have in Canada.

• (1310)

**Mr. Mike Lake (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Industry, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, in the spirit of co-operation and collegiality, I, too, share a high regard for the Conservative member for Edmonton—Leduc, the chair of the finance committee. I know that the hon. member had the opportunity to serve with him on the industry committee. I have enjoyed serving with the hon. member for Windsor West on the industry committee as well.

In regard to a couple of the issues that he raised, I think the member may be mixing up a couple of issues. On the one hand, he talks about the issue related to people with perceptual disabilities and digital locks. What I had said earlier today was that there is an exception to allow the breaking of digital locks to enable people with perceptual disabilities to use copyright material, according to the rest of the rules in the legislation.

Second, in terms of the long distance education the hon. member talked about, members talked about burning materials and things like that. The idea with the things put in, in relation to long distance education, is that what is done in a classroom in terms of things that are kind of spontaneous or maybe display or a presentation of a song or something like that should also be made available in a long distance type or digital format.

Someone may podcast the display of material or the performance of a song that happens in a classroom setting. What we are saying is that copy cannot be taken and kept forever. At some point the person from a distance will view it and then at that point it would have to be destroyed. The person who attends the classroom would not have the opportunity to copy it either, under the law. It is maintaining some consistency for the purposes of long distance education.

**Mr. Brian Masse:** Mr. Speaker, I did not mention the visual display. I think it was the member from Halifax who mentioned it earlier.

### *Government Orders*

I was thinking more of the work that I had done with persons with developmental disabilities or learning disabilities, where it has taken longer or there have been specific strategies employed for the learning to take place. They also sometimes get learning supports in our colleges and our universities.

I would even say that, for myself, people can see the failure of my taking long distance French lessons back in the early 1990s. It did not work out too well for me. I tried it at that time. I know it is hard to believe but I am trying again. I did take long distance learning with regard to that. I actually passed the first course but it is all gone now.

I worry more about those people who have those types of challenges who cannot go back and reference those materials again that gave them the strength of learning at that time, and that they have paid for. I fail to see the logic of why we would take away something that we are encouraging Canadians to do. They are investing and growing as a person and they would only benefit from that review if they wanted it in the future. There are lots of times when people read a book a second time.

**Mr. Scott Simms (Bonaville—Gander—Grand Falls—Windsor, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, on the point that my hon. Conservative colleague talked about, which was circumvention of digital locks for the sake of exceptions, what he is talking about is subclause 41.16 (2), circumvention of digital locks for persons with perceptual disabilities. However, the exception stipulates that said circumvention must not “to not unduly impair the technological protection measure”. I read this as nullifying any right to circumvent.

The stakeholders, for example the Provincial Resource Centre for the Visually Impaired, said the following about it. It said:

The exception that permits circumvention of technological protection measures (TPMs) and the means to circumvent these measures for the purpose of producing alternate formats...may be largely nullified by [that section]....

Perhaps my hon. colleague could point that out as well and perhaps talk more about this bill and how the balance just does not work for him.

● (1315)

**Mr. Brian Masse:** Mr. Speaker, it is an important question to clarify because, once again, the onus then goes onto the person with the disability. I do not even get the logic of this. When I went to high school, if I took a course or a class and I did not do very well, I would have to go to summer school, which I did. I was not forced to. I passed by just enough but I wanted to do better so I went back and took the material again over the summer.

Therefore, if people take an on-line course and earn a B or C, or something like that, a lot of people would enjoy going back to learn it a second time when they have time. A lot of people taking these courses are single mothers, people living in challenging times in terms of their schedule. Why would they not have the right to go back and improve themselves since they have already paid for it? They are not asking for more effort from the provider of the service that does not need to invest anymore. What they are doing is going over the material a second time to improve themselves and their capabilities in the Canadian economy.

I do not understand the logic of this, let alone why we would have the interest in doing it. It defies the reasons that people are bettering

themselves, which is to improve themselves by using available content, be it book material or through visual or audio learning.

**Mr. Glenn Thibeault (Sudbury, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I work with my hon. colleague from Windsor on this file in the industry committee and one of the things that was raised yesterday when we were talking about e-commerce was digital locks and how that would have an effect on e-commerce. I believe it was Mr. Geist who was talking about that in the industry committee as well. We are not saying that we need to ban all copyright. What we are saying here is that we need something that is balanced and fair.

I would like to ask my hon. colleague when he thinks Canadians will finally get the copyright legislation that works for them as consumers and, as well, looks at the digital lock piece.

**Mr. Brian Masse:** Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for Sudbury for his previous work on getting the pressure going on digital locks on phones. The member from Thunder Bay was active in pushing Canadians.

As consumers, we have been behind for many years. Here on the Hill, we would go to a reception for an event related to another country and people there would show us the cellphone they had with multiple cards, all bought in their country and all unlocked for the last five to seven years. Meanwhile, they were locked here.

I am hoping we can move toward a more balanced approach, improve the bill, get it done and modernize the act to ensure our consumers and our cultural industry are protected. Digital locks is a big issue in this.

**Mr. Mike Lake:** Mr. Speaker, I will come back quickly to the conversation around long distance education. It is important to note that the hon. member repeatedly referred to the taking away of rights. Of course, nothing would be taken away. Benefits are being added. Additional opportunities are being added, through this legislation, that simply are not there right now.

We had to strike a balance between creators and the users of the content, and we think we have struck that balance. If we look at the 39 hours of testimony, so far, at the committee stage, we see witnesses after witness speak to the balance that we have struck with this legislation.

I want to read a quote here, just changing direction a bit. It is a quote from the Canadian Anti-Counterfeiting Network. Caroline Czajko, the chair of the CACN, said:

We're pleased that the government is committed to getting tough on IP crimes. Piracy is a massive problem in Canada which has a tangible economic impact on government revenue, legitimate retailers, rights holders and consumers. It's extremely difficult for legitimate retailers to compete with those who abandon all ethics as they steal and rip.

I would like the hon. member's comments on that quote.



*Government Orders*

**Mr. Brian Masse:** Mr. Speaker, the Writers Guild of Canada talked about digital locks as being neither forward looking nor in the best interests of consumers and creators. Digital locks, at their best, will simply freeze current revenue streams for creators.

The balance has not been struck in this legislation. I went through testimony after testimony to counter the one example that the government was using, which was the person who wanted to deregulate our banks, and we are still not seeing that balance.

We want to stop the theft that is happening. We, on this side of the House, are willing to work toward achieving that. We tried to do that in the past. The bill is significantly different. This is the third incarnation of this particular strategy. The government was not right before and it is not right this time either. We are willing to find a solution.

I look forward to hearing the testimony at committee and moving forward on this. I look forward to working with that member on the very important e-commerce work we are doing on the House of Commons industry committee. Canadian consumers are being treated unfairly compared to consumers in the United States.

• (1320)

**Mr. Scott Simms (Bonaville—Gander—Grand Falls—Windsor, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I want to congratulate all in the House who have spoken to the bill so far. It has been quite informative. This is a very large, deep, complex bill. It has been bandied about now for the last 12 years, and as my hon. colleague pointed out, the number of emails and amount of input we are receiving on the bill have been quite substantial. In a 12-hour period I have received 2,200 emails regarding this issue. A lot of these emails were addressed to the ministers involved, the ministers of both heritage and industry, and copied to me as the heritage critic, but it certainly gives an idea of just how large this issue is. The implications are going to be felt for quite some time. I want to thank everyone who wrote to our party or to me personally about this matter and about the provisions in the bill.

I will not go back to the historical context, which goes back to Gutenberg, but I certainly would like to talk about the recent additions of this debate and how we have handled it going back to the WIPO treaties, which I will talk about in a little while.

The WIPO treaties were around 1996. As signatories to them, we have to come up with the right legislation to strike the balance that everyone keeps talking about. It is up to us in the opposition to make sure that balance is struck and to raise the bar in debate to make sure that the balance is there.

A lot of the debate is centred around digital locks. The supremacy of digital locks, as my hon. colleague from Timmins—James Bay mentioned earlier, has become a very contentious issue. I will also talk about the creation of works and the protection of the rights of artists, which we feel are of prime importance. As the heritage critic, I spoke to many artists about this issue and about how they want their works to be protected.

As we have all mentioned, in the case of copyright the balance we are seeking is a very thin line between infringement and the right to use a piece of copyrighted material for personal reasons only, and not

for other reasons, either commercial or non-commercial. That is why we are here: to seek that balance and to raise the bar.

I would like to give some background now. I would also like to thank the Library of Parliament for providing us with information about what was Bill C-32 and now is Bill C-11. What I will read pertains to Bill C-32, but as the government pointed out, it returned the same bill to the House as it was before, and nothing has been changed.

Copyright is a legal term describing rights given to creators for their literary and artistic works. Copyright attaches to an original work that is fixed in some material form. In other words, copyright protects the expression of an idea or intellectual creation, but it does not protect the idea itself. That is the balance that we need to achieve. It is that one person's perception of a certain idea, and the thought and work that go into that, must be protected. We know that for the vast majority of artists or authors, the remuneration for their work is not always quite up to what it would be in other industries.

The Copyright Act that we speak of and that we hope to change sets out the right to authorize or prohibit certain uses of a work and to receive compensation for its use. There are certain general themes that we have to go through, much of which is to achieve the balance between the right of creators to use their own material for the sake of a profit or to put forth an idea, and the right of others to use this idea and to further their own.

There are two types of rights. Artists who consider themselves to be creators have the economic right to derive financial reward and to make a living at what they do, and of course there is the moral right to protect the integrity of their original work.

• (1325)

That, too, we need to look at when we talk about ephemeral rights, digital locks or TPMs, international agreements and how we are going to do this, because there is another factor we have to consider: although we would consider this to be domestic legislation, it is really an international concept. This is why we create legislation around the treaties that we sign. It is one thing for an artist to have material and to use it for the sake of profit, but it is not only used domestically: it can be used outside our borders. As a result, we have to seek out ways to protect artists and the ways in which they want to make a living.

In the Copyright Act, part I, literary works are described as books, pamphlets, poems, dramatic works, film, videos, DVDs, plays, screenplays and scripts. Musical works are compositions that consist of both words and music or music only. Artists' work includes paintings, drawings, maps, photographs, sculptures and architectural works.

### *Government Orders*

Part II of the Copyright Act contains provisions for what we call “neighbouring rights”, consisting of copyright protection for three categories of work that fall under “other subject-matter”. They include performers’ performances, such as actors, musicians, dancers and singers who have copyrights in their performances; sound recordings, meaning copyright for makers of recordings such as records, cassettes and compact discs of the old days, and what is available on MP3 or clouds, which I believe is now being talked about as also protected by copyright; and communication signals. Broadcasters have copyrights in their broadcasting communication signals as well.

We get to the gist of what the Copyright Act was set up to do in the beginning, the genesis of which goes back hundreds of years, and that is to protect the integrity of works for economic reasons and to provide the original artists with a moral right to hang on to their pieces of work. Reproduction can take place in various forms, such as printed publications or sound recordings, and therein lies the protection purpose: the distribution of copies of a work through its public performance, its broadcasting or other communication to the public; its translation into other languages; and its adaptation, such as turning a novel into a screenplay. These are examples of what we hope to provide protection for.

At the same time, we need to look at other things that would be contained under part III of the Copyright Act. That is where we get into the concept known as fair dealing.

The United States of America normally calls it “fair usage”. In Canada and in the international context we use it primarily as “fair dealing”.

Here is what we consider: non-profit education users are considered in this bill, as well as non-profit libraries, museums, archives and those with perceptual disabilities, parody, and satire. All of these categories fall under fair dealing, which is the use of copyrighted material to further education of the masses, let us say through museums and archives, and of course its use for those with disabilities.

Earlier we talked about the situation in which long-distance education could be at risk. There are passages that could deeply affect people involved in long-distance education. It is something that we in the Liberal Party are very concerned about.

In the past, there have been deep discussions about rulings in the Supreme Court, in particular *CCH Canadian Limited v. Law Society of Upper Canada*. It was a judgment that looked at fair dealing in the context that it should be dealt with, which is to say the fair use of copyrighted material for the sake of the general public. What derived from that was the six-step process. The six-step process talked about six different measures that include having to look at the particular cases through a useful analytical framework to govern determinations of fairness in future cases. These measures include, number one, the purpose of the dealing or the purpose of doing this; number two, the character of the dealing; number three, the amount of the dealing; number four, alternatives to the dealing; number five, the nature of the particular work; and number six, the effect of the dealing on how the work would be dealt with in the marketplace.

There is another international concept that talks about copyright. It is in what is called the Berne Convention. That is a three-step process that is very important, because this three-step process from the Berne Convention is used in many international contexts.

● (1330)

Personally, I think it is a pretty good place to be, because it gives the public, legislators and the courts a measure by which they can look at what is perceived to be fair dealing. It is being used in many contexts. One context was in Canada, although it was expanded upon into the six-step process.

Essentially, the Berne Convention looks at those three measures. Those three measures talk about restricting them to personal cases, that they do not conflict with the normal expectation of the work, and that they do not unreasonably prejudice the legitimate interests of the author.

Therefore, one of the situations that we should consider in doing this is that whether it is a three-step or six-step process, it will be a multi-step process by which the courts can adequately judge what is considered to be fair dealing in situations like the education exemption.

We can have a deep discussion in committee about how to deal with the broad exemptions brought forward, such as the non-profit education sector. I have received hundreds, if not thousands, of emails about this particular exemption. The Canadian Federation of Students believes that the exemption works, because it allows students to further their education as long as it is respectful to the particular author. However, we have received many emails and letters and have had verbal discussions and presentations from authors—people who make a living from writing textbooks, for example—who feel that this particular bill is not the balance that would help them in any way, shape or form.

That is why I believe that if we start talking about the exemptions, we should also talk about a responsible way to handle them. A multi-step process is a good way to consider. Many jurisdictions around the world that considered them to be broad have narrowed down these exemptions, because they have seen how this works. It is something we should discuss in committee, and I will get to that a bit later as well.

Part IV talks about civil and criminal remedies, awards for damages and loss of profits, injunctions and fines.

We have talked about statutory damages. In many cases some people feel they are too stringent, while others feel they are too light. There is a distinction between commercial usage and non-commercial usage or infringement. Commercial infringement requires a larger penalty because of the damage it may cause in the marketplace and how it may skew certain markets by what it does. Non-commercial infringement should be considered as well, and not so much at a higher dollar value, as with fines and remedies or even jail terms.



*Government Orders*

One of the issues that came to light back in 2005 or 2006 was that the big multinational recording companies were taking kids to court for infringing on their material. I remember making a statement at the time in committee that my 10-year-old had just downloaded a song from a website. It was file sharing. He did not know he was breaking the law. I did not know he was breaking the law at the time. Perhaps I am a technological laggard, but nonetheless it was basically the same as my son walking into HMV, grabbing a CD off the rack, putting it in his pocket and leaving. What is the difference? It is stealing music. It is stealing someone's material, and it should not be allowed.

In order to do this, we have to adapt to the new technologies that we have and the technology that we use to entertain, to create music, to receive that music and enjoy it. If I purchase a piece of music, I listen to it either on a CD, an MP3 player or my Blackberry. The discussion then becomes one on how a particular artist receives compensation for the work that he or she has done.

That is the discussion that was brought forward in the House in the last session regarding the levy. The opposition called it the iPod tax, which is incredibly disingenuous and an absolute insult to people who are making a living from music.

• (1335)

The funny thing was that a week prior to calling it the iPod tax, the government slapped a security fee on people who were checking in at airports. I could have easily called it a traveller's tax. The security fee is okay, but the iPod tax is something entirely different.

The hon. member for Peterborough talked about how it did not matter whether it was a fee or a levy, that a tax was a tax. However, time and time again we are seeing fees such as EI premiums going up in January. The terminology is never a "tax". It is only a tax when the government deems it to be a tax.

Unfortunately, some of the debate gets off the rails and it become disingenuous. If we are going to committee with this, we should deeply consider a decent, mature, responsible debate about what is at the heart of this debate, which is to allow people to receive compensation for their work. We all know now that people are achieving music in different ways.

It used to be considered a levy when a charge was put on an actual CD. If people bought blank CDs or cassettes, they could record from the radio or other devices to get music for free. They still had to buy the blank CD or cassette, therefore the levy was applied to that. It was a way of remuneration for artists whose music was stolen by many people, some people who were unaware of it.

That is the type of debate we need to have in the House. I would implore the government, as well as the opposition, to have this debate in the House right now. Unfortunately what has happened is we have heard all this testimony, well over 140 witnesses and over 160 submissions, yet no changes have been made to the legislation.

The government says that it is sincere about going ahead, but going ahead with what? There is no indication whatsoever that any changes will be made other than to the "technical stuff", which is really a technicality in and of itself.

If the government wants to continue this any further, we should consider a deep discussion about this and serious amendments, which is why I support the amendment put forward by my colleague, the member for Halifax West. It talks about a way of handling the legislation before it gets too focused and too confined. I have problems with the digital locks and the education exemption, which need to be looked at. I hope we can have that discussion.

**Mr. Charlie Angus (Timmins—James Bay, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I listened with great interest to my hon. colleague. I have listened to him for seven years during the time we have been on committee together. I think I know him like he is a relative, whether that is good or bad I am not sure.

The member has laid out many of the problems that have been identified with this bill, particularly in terms of the long distance education provisions and the ridiculous position of the government that nobody should have a right to their class notes after 30 days, that someone should come in, take them away and burn them to protect some kind of business model. I have never heard any witness defend such a bizarre notion.

The member talked about amending language and going to committee. He talked about a serious amendment, but the amendment I heard is that we do not go ahead with the bill. I am surprised by the Liberal position on this.

There are problems with the bill, but we need to get a copyright bill to the House, to committee so we can deal with the serious problems and the need for amendments as raised by the member. This is crucial.

What is the point of talking about having a serious discussion about the bill if the only amendment his party is bringing forward is to kill this before we even get a chance to get to the amendment phase?

• (1340)

**Mr. Scott Simms:** Mr. Speaker, my hon. colleague and I appreciate the comments. However, one of the things that has to be realized, in looking at the legislation and the amendments that were put forward before, is that no changes have been made.

A lot of the changes that we and other members proposed would not be accepted by the government and would not be accepted by the chair in the committee stage. The amendment we have proposed is to take this back and look at once again, given all the submissions that have gone to committee. Let us look at that. We cannot look at that once we are handcuffed into a position, after second reading, by accepting it in principle.

**Mr. Mike Lake (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Industry, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I have a pretty straightforward question and it probably is just a yes or no answer.

On April 14, 2010, we had a vote in the House of Commons. The vote was in concurrence with the motion from the heritage committee. I will read the motion, which says:

That the Committee recommends that the government amend Part VIII of the Copyright Act so that the definition of "audio recording medium" extends to devices with internal memory, so that the levy on copying music will apply to digital music recorders as well...

*Government Orders*

That would result in a tax on iPods. Every Conservative member in the House voted no to that and every opposition member, including that member, voted yes.

If that vote was held again today would the member vote the same way, yes or no?

**Mr. Scott Simms:** Mr. Speaker, what I find so funny about all of this is that he forgets one very important point. The reason why it came to the House was because the Conservative chair of the committee decided it was the right thing to do. As an illustration, for the sake of history, I can say what happened. The member voted to put it into the House. He voted yes to support it. Not only that, he wrote a letter to the minister saying that he supported it. Then when he got in the House, he was told to vote against it. Now he is no longer the chair, which is too bad, because he was—

**An hon. member:** Answer the question, yes or no.

**Mr. Scott Simms:** Yes.

[Translation]

**Mrs. Anne-Marie Day (Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, despite the fact that the title of this bill mentions copyright, which is defined as the rights granted to a creator, I do not think that this bill is good for creators. A creator can be a musician, a singer, an actor or a performer. Creators are not service providers, retailers or industry representatives.

Can the hon. member tell the House whether this bill hurts the interests of creators?

[English]

**Mr. Scott Simms:** Mr. Speaker, I believe she is talking about the education exemption. As I mentioned in my speech, it is one of the things that we had. There was a lot of input to us about how the education exemption was causing a lot of concern for many of the authors. We listened to them and we realized that there was an argument back and forth as to how much money was involved, whether it was crippling to the university community or crippling to the authors in order to make a living.

This is why I talked about this multi-step process. Some people believe that the six step process is not sufficient. Some people believe that they should use the three step process, which was endorsed under the Berne convention as a way of dealing with it. It set out some really strict guidelines as to how we would deal with fair dealing and what would be considered to be fair dealing. If we have exemptions for a certain group of people, we should subject it to fair dealing. To do that, we have to put in guidelines by which some of the courts can be led through.

We did receive quite a few concerns about this from authors and the artistic community. I hope that discussion continues in the House.

**Mr. Mike Lake:** Mr. Speaker, I think the hon. member was talking about the education provisions of the act. There are six criteria that must be followed. First, before it even gets to that point, there is a two step process. That is the second step. The first step is to determine whether it is fair dealing in the first place. If the hon. member takes the time to study the legislation, as I know he will, and I look forward to serving on the committee with him, he will see that

those criteria are sufficient to enable this important exception to go forward. We heard from witness after witness during the testimony who were in favour of moving forward with this part of the legislation.

While I have the opportunity, his party has moved that we withdraw the legislation completely. That is not what we heard from the witnesses. John Manley, a former prominent Liberal member, has spoken to the urgency of getting the legislation passed as quickly as possible.

How can the hon. member possibly justify, as the member for Timmins—James Bay asked, wiping out the legislation altogether after 12 years of work? The hon. member spoke about the 12 years of “bandying about” to get to this point. How in the world could he justify just wiping out the legislation and starting again?

• (1345)

**Mr. Scott Simms:** Because the government did nothing about it, Mr. Speaker. I said in my press conference this morning, and forgive me if I am infringing on copyright here, that there were 167 submission, that the number of changes was zero and that the political lip service was priceless.

**Mr. Mike Lake:** Mr. Speaker, I am not sure about the answer to the last question. We could sit here and exchange quotes from some individuals who have said positive things about the legislation and members opposite can bring up negative things. We heard 39 hours of testimony before the committee and we had countless consultations prior to the legislation being put forward in the first place.

If we looked comprehensively at all the testimony we heard before our committee, we would note that a balance was struck. Not everybody liked everything they saw. Not everybody did not like everything they saw. However, we heard over and over again that, on balance, it was the best legislation that had come forward.

Even some of the people the opposition quoted very selectively, criticizing certain aspects of the legislation, spoke very favourably of the balance struck and to the importance of getting the legislation passed.

We heard 39 hours of committee testimony and we had all the consultation. We have moved forward with the same bill because we want to continue that discussion around the same legislation. How many more hours do we need before the hon. member will be happy?

**Mr. Scott Simms:** Mr. Speaker, when it actually works and starts to sink in. I do not know why, but for some reason the government assumes to paint this picture that everybody loves this and thinks it is balanced. I received 2,200 emails in 12 hours. If it were that balanced, I would not get any. What would be the point?

I look at elements of this, like WikiLeaks, which put out something that said the former minister told Americans that he would show this to them before he even tabled it. Who actually has the input here?



[Translation]

**Mr. Pierre Nantel (Longueuil—Pierre-Boucher, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, it is my great pleasure to speak to Bill C-11, because I have a special interest in it. I spent nearly 20 years in the recording industry, which has seen some hard times. In our opinion, there can be no objection to reviewing the Copyright Act. Obviously, today, in 2011, we are lagging behind at the international level in terms of modernizing the law. It is high time it was done. The other major western countries have done it and it is our turn. It is really past time.

We deplore the fact that the bill is a little like Swiss cheese: there are a lot of bubbles, a lot of holes, in terms of protecting rights holders and creators. We are talking about this bill in theoretical terms but, in concrete terms, as my colleague was saying, the way we consume cultural products today is different. Before, we bought a record for \$15 or \$20, we took it home and we listened to it. While the recording industry has kept up its production rate and budgets have declined slightly—since with technological progress we can now record music more cheaply—it is still a cultural industry. Investors, industrialists and consultants who support a creator invest large amounts of money to make a product that will sell.

We are not talking about a minstrel strumming a lute on the church steps. These are people who have created songs, and other people who saw a business opportunity there and said that everyone is going to want that song or that album and will be prepared to pay a price to buy it and listen to it. What the recording industry has experienced is unparalleled in terms of plummeting revenues.

I will give you a brief overview. The complete operation of producing an album, which includes recording, promotion, video clips, launches and so on, calls for a budget of about \$100,000. That is a very ordinary budget in an ordinary recording industry. We are not talking about a huge operation like a Michael Jackson album made before his death, that might have cost \$1.5 million to produce. We are talking about an album that would have cost \$20,000 or \$30,000 or \$40,000 and all the associated expenses.

To recover that investment, the companies, the recording industry—and that means jobs for people who work in this field, as I was lucky enough to do—would sell the record for between \$15 and \$20. Today, with modernization, the Internet, digitization of music and the incredible capacity to create master quality copies, this is no longer the same generation as when we were young. Then, we copied music onto cassettes and there was often more background noise than music. That is no longer the case today, and that is the issue.

If a digital version of a song exists, thousands of copies can be made in a few hours and the rights holder will have been deprived of his due. When people today buy music on the Internet, they sometimes buy the complete album but usually they buy the CD in a store. Those who buy their CDs and their music on the Internet very often take a piecemeal approach, by downloading one, two or three songs at a time. The retail price is \$1 or \$1.49. That means that the recording industry, as it attempts to recoup its production and marketing costs of approximately \$100,000, did so based on a price of \$15 to \$20 per CD. Nowadays it has to make do with \$2 or \$3.

I sincerely believe that no other industry has experienced such a drop in revenue in such a short time. We are talking about huge

### *Government Orders*

percentages, from \$15 or \$20 to \$3. This is unprecedented. The industry is already on its knees. We must enact legislation now on behalf of the rights holders, so that the situation can be corrected.

• (1350)

Copyright is essential. Allow me to quote the Minister of Canadian Heritage and Official Languages who, referring to Canada, stated that the cultural sector contributes twice as much as the forestry industry to our GDP.

The arts and culture sector generates spinoffs of over \$46 billion and provides work for over 600,000 people. This is an industry, a sector of the economy, that is extremely important.

There are problems with Bill C-11 in relation to YouTube, the education system and other related areas. The biggest problem, however, has to do with the collective copyright collection system, commonly called private copying.

Earlier, I gave an overview of how we used to consume music. We all know that a decade or so ago, the CD-R hit the marketplace. Using an ordinary home computer, it was possible to copy a disc—ideally, one that had been purchased—and immediately make a copy of it that would be identical from a quality standpoint, with only the graphics missing. This craze led to creators, the rights holders, feeling like they were missing out, and they successfully went about putting in place a compensation system. Compensation is the right word here. The private copying system is a form of compensation for losses incurred as a result of the development of a new technology.

This system, which initially applied to audio cassettes, CD-Rs and DVD-Rs, generated significant amounts of money. In 2008, for instance, the figure was \$27.6 million. The following year, the amount raised through this private copying compensation system dropped to \$10.8 million and it continues to decline. Why? Certainly there are those among you who have purchased CD-Rs at one time or another, and very few people buy them these days. As far as music consumption is concerned—I am talking about legal consumption in a suitable format—people now copy their music onto a portable digital player, an iPod or an MP3. The format the royalty was based on, in other words the CD-R, has become completely obsolete by the current changes.

That is why the copyright owner lobbies have asked that this private copying compensation system be extended to include portable digital players or iPods. As the hon. member was saying earlier, the members opposite reacted by wearing t-shirts that said *No iPod tax*. This is great. It is a very good response to the creators who were feeling forgotten, cheated and abandoned.

*Statements by Members*

What can we offer those creators today when Bill C-11 does not address the problem of the private copying system? This is certainly the most important aspect of all. We could talk about exemptions for the likes of YouTube, which is increasingly becoming a competitive alternative to the way music has traditionally been distributed. I keep talking about music because it is an area I am familiar with and also because music was the first victim of this digitization and this new accessibility. In a few years we will have the technology to download feature films very quickly. Some may say that is already possible, but it is still not very common.

The thing about music is that the video for the song being copied takes much longer to download. The problem that music is currently experiencing will very quickly spread to the other cultural media we find on the Internet.

I will stop there for now.

• (1355)

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bruce Stanton):** The hon. member for Longueuil—Pierre-Boucher will have 10 minutes to finish his speech and 10 minutes for questions and comments when the House resumes debate on the motion.

## STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

[Translation]

### JUSTICE

**Mrs. Maria Mourani (Ahuntsic, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, Quebec taxpayers and children are the first innocent victims of the Conservatives' omnibus bill. They are being forced to accept measures that conflict with the approach that has made Quebec a model in the fight against crime—its pride and joy. Plus, they will have to put up millions of dollars to pay for these Conservative measures.

The Minister of Public Safety even said that Quebeckers will have to cut \$500 million from health and education to focus on the government's priorities, such as criminalizing teenagers.

The Minister of Justice has made a point of ignoring the repeated demands of Quebec's justice minister, who said, and I quote, "I am disappointed that, despite much correspondence and one meeting, the concerns I raised with you have not been addressed in Bill C-10."

It is clearly going to be harder and harder to ensure that Quebec is heard. May we soon see Quebec's own criminal code.

\* \* \*

• (1400)

[English]

### KOOTENAY—COLUMBIA

**Mr. David Wilks (Kootenay—Columbia, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I rise today to give thanks to the people who elected me to represent the great riding of Kootenay—Columbia.

Although I was blessed with a number of volunteers, I would especially like to thank Wilma Croisdale, my campaign manager;

Sheryl Stephenson, my official agent; and John Kettle, who was instrumental in fundraising.

The Kootenay—Columbia riding is nestled in the Rocky Mountains of British Columbia and is blessed to have a diverse economy which includes Teck coal, the world's second-largest exporter of metallurgical coal, and a number of logging companies which create a vast number of jobs.

My riding boasts four national parks: Kootenay, Yoho, Glacier and Mount Revelstoke. We have world-class ski resorts in Revelstoke, Golden, Invermere and Fernie. Our tourism sector is one of the strongest in Canada.

The Kootenay—Columbia riding is a great example of balancing big industry with nature and recognizing the importance of protecting the environment. I invite everyone to come and visit what we in the Kootenay—Columbia riding believe is one of the greatest places on earth.

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### SUDBURY FOOD BANK

**Mr. Glenn Thibeault (Sudbury, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to take this opportunity to honour the hard work of the people at the Sudbury Food Bank and to congratulate them on the imminent opening of their new warehouse facility.

The first employee food drive in Sudbury took place 24 years ago, launched by Edgar Burton. Although we lost Edgar, today the Sudbury Food Bank's Christmas food drive still bears his name.

The 45 member agencies ensure that every month 14,000 Sudburians have enough food to eat. In 2010, over 400 tons of non-perishable food and hot meals were provided to individuals in need.

On October 25, the food bank will launch its new warehouse facility which will allow the food bank to expand into fresh and frozen foods, as well as streamline its current food distribution. It will also aid individuals across northern Ontario by doubling as the northeastern Ontario distribution centre for the Ontario Association of Food Banks.

Although I dream of the day when food banks are no longer needed, I am glad that, until that point, we have wonderful organizations like the Sudbury Food Bank to support our local communities.

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### UNDERGROUND RAILROAD

**Mr. Jeff Watson (Essex, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, October 22 marks the 10th anniversary of the International Underground Railroad Memorial monuments. Established in 2001, the Gateway to Freedom Monument in Hart Plaza in Detroit, Michigan, and its companion the Tower of Freedom Monument across the river in Windsor, Ontario, forever mark the hope, thanksgiving and bittersweet reality of loved ones lost or left behind on the perilous northward journey to freedom in Canada of slaves of African descent fleeing the southern U.S.



*Statements by Members*

As we celebrate our collective heritage this anniversary, let us stand in solidarity to declare that all mankind is created equal; to honour the courage of those fleeing slaves, and all people of good will who were an indispensable part of the underground railroad, and the ultimate abolition of slavery; and resolve to do all we can today to ensure our birthright of freedom is experienced by all.

I call on members of this House to join members of the U.S. Congress, who resolved earlier this week to celebrate the 10th anniversary of the International Underground Railroad Memorial monuments.

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**VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTERS**

**Hon. Geoff Regan (Halifax West, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, last Saturday the Hammonds Plains Fire Department celebrated a major milestone, its 50th anniversary.

Since 1961, countless volunteers in the department have risked their own safety to protect the lives and property of the people in their community. They sacrificed time with their families to answer the call of duty, regardless of birthdays, holidays or lost sleep. Their commitment is an inspiration for us all.

It was an honour to take part in the celebration along with some of the founding members, current firefighters, and representatives from the Halifax Regional Fire and Emergency Service.

I want to take this opportunity to thank the members of the Hammonds Plains Fire Department and their supporters for 50 years of service and I invite all hon. colleagues to join me.

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**OKTOBERFEST**

**Mr. Stephen Woodworth (Kitchener Centre, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, last week Kitchener celebrated Oktoberfest, the premier North American Bavarian festival. It is a major cultural event and it brings in major tourist revenue. It is all organized by hundreds of volunteers who devote countless hours. A big thanks to all who contributed, including President Vic Degutis and Uncle Hans himself.

To my colleagues who have not yet sampled this celebration, they have to visit Oktoberfest at least once in their lives. Make it next year.

Our Festhallen are the world's best, but there is so much more to Oktoberfest. There is German Pioneer Day, the Miss Oktoberfest Gala, the Tour de Hans Celebrity Dinner, and the Family Breakfast.

Visitors can watch our "So You Think You Can Tanz" competition, join the Great Oktoberfest Barrel Race, or experience an 1890s Thanksgiving at Woodside.

Dirmdls and lederhosen are everywhere.

Members should put this event in their calendars now.

It is another reason I am proud to be the member of Parliament for Kitchener Centre. *Prost.*

● (1405)

**RESTAURANT INDUSTRY**

**Mr. Peter Stoffer (Sackville—Eastern Shore, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, today on behalf of all parliamentarians we welcome the Canadian Restaurant and Foodservices Association and all its members to Ottawa for its restaurant summit.

Whether we have a Triple-O at the White Spot in Vancouver, fish and chips at Ches's in St. John's, Newfoundland and Labrador, a clubhouse on brown bread with fries at my favourite, Hella's Restaurant in Lower Sackville, Nova Scotia, or great bacon and eggs at Dunn's here on Queen Street, it is the Restaurant and Foodservices Association of Canada which promotes over one million Canadians, many of them new immigrants. They bring in millions and millions of dollars to our economy. It is a vital link to our economy.

On behalf of all members of Parliament, we salute the members of the Restaurant and Foodservices Association of Canada. We thank them for coming to Ottawa. We look forward to working with them and solving their issues in the near future.

God love them and thank them.

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**AGRICULTURE AND AGRI-FOOD**

**Mr. Ray Boughen (Palliser, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, earlier this month I was on hand as the Prime Minister and the Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food announced that a pasta processing plant will be built at the Global Transportation Hub outside of Regina.

Alliance Grain Traders will invest \$50 million in a flour milling plant creating 60 full-time permanent jobs and 150 construction jobs. This multi-purpose flour milling facility demonstrates that an open market will attract investment, encourage innovation and create value-added jobs.

Within an open market system Alliance Grain Traders will be able to negotiate directly with farmers, cutting out costly red tape, administration fees and delays. Farmers will be able to decide to sell to Alliance Grain Traders or a different buyer at the time and price of their choosing with maximum revenue in mind within an open market.

I am pleased to announce this investment in Saskatchewan today.

*Statements by Members***RESTAURANT INDUSTRY**

**Mr. Dean Allison (Niagara West—Glanbrook, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the Canadian Restaurant and Foodservices Association is organizing its first ever restaurant industry summit on the Hill. I personally would like to welcome to Ottawa CRFA Immediate Past Chairman of the Board Gerard Curran, President Garth Whyte, Executive Vice-President of Government Affairs Joyce Reynolds, and their entire delegation. I congratulate them on this proud achievement.

As a former restaurateur myself, I appreciate the tremendous contribution the restaurant industry makes not only to the economy of Canada, but to its social fabric as well. The experience one gains working in the restaurant industry goes far beyond food and drink. Lessons in customer service, teamwork, organization and commitment all provide skills and training that are vital to success in any job.

Based on a study conducted by the CRFA, 22% of Canadians found their first job in the restaurant industry compared to 16% in retail. Simply put, Canada's restaurant industry puts jobs and economic growth on the menu.

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*[Translation]***LUCIE JOYAL**

**Mrs. Sana Hassainia (Verchères—Les Patriotes, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to highlight the exceptional work of someone in my riding of Verchères—Les Patriotes. Lucie Joyal, a resident of Boucherville, was chosen to receive the 2011 Governor General's Award in Commemoration of the Persons Case.

She has worked tirelessly to eliminate violence against women and children. Since the 1990s, she has worked to advance research as well the detection and prevention of spousal and family violence throughout Quebec.

In 2005, she helped create the Marie Vincent sexual abuse centre of expertise, the first of its kind in the country. This centre is internationally recognized as an innovative model for improving services provided to young victims of sexual abuse.

In Quebec and elsewhere, she has been described as a visionary in social innovation for young victims of violence.

I would like to congratulate Lucie Joyal for her involvement and her contribution to Quebec and Canada.

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*[English]***EARL MCRAE**

**Mr. Peter Goldring (Edmonton East, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, we have lost a great Canadian writer and journalist, Earl McRae, a man I came first to know personally when I took on the task of raising funds to allow war veterans of the Loyal Eddies, Seaforth, Three Rivers, Provost Corps and Royal 22nd, the Van Doos, to return to Ortona, Italy for Christmas 1998.

Earl immediately saw the vision of former foes, Canadian and German, joining together for a re-creation of the 1943 Canadian

battlefield Christmas dinner, to reflect and celebrate in the season of goodwill to mankind the years of peace that followed.

His prodigious newspaper columns along with Lowell Green's prolific airwaves plea for help made Christmas in Ortona happen. Earl then travelled with the veterans to Ortona to report on the pilgrimage.

Earl McRae, a friend to veterans, an extraordinary journalist, a champion of what is right. May his deserving soul now rest in peace.

\* \* \*

● (1410)

*[Translation]***GOVERNOR GENERAL'S AWARD IN COMMEMORATION OF THE PERSONS CASE**

**Ms. Françoise Boivin (Gatineau, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to congratulate the six recipients of the 2011 Governor General's Award in Commemoration of the Persons Case. The following women were honoured at Rideau Hall earlier today: Madeleine Boscoe, Nancy Hartling, Lucie Joyal, Sharon Donna McIvor, Kim Pate and Amber JoAnn Fletcher.

Every October since 1979, this award has highlighted the exceptional contribution of certain Canadian women to the advancement of women's equality in Canada. This year's recipients have long worked to eliminate violence against women, advance equality for their aboriginal sisters and improve the lives of the most marginalized among us.

But the fact that this award exists demonstrates that there is plenty of work to do before there is true gender equality in Canada. We cannot be content with equality on paper—we need to take action, as these six women have done.

I invite all members to salute these great women. They are true models of social justice in our country, and they deserve our sincere congratulations.

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*[English]***TORONTO RADIO STATION**

**Mr. Terence Young (Oakville, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I rise to recognize and congratulate radio G98.7, Toronto's first radio station dedicated exclusively to black and Caribbean music and talk programming which began broadcasting on Monday, October 3. Noting a lack of urban programming on the GTA airwaves, our government welcomed this initiative and G98.7 received its broadcast licence from the CRTC on June 9 of this year.



CEO Fitzroy Gordon announced that G98.7 has officially begun broadcasting to all of Toronto, Niagara Falls, St. Catharines, and areas of Hamilton, Brampton, Aurora and Ajax. G98.7 has begun with music only and will commence full-scale programming in November, including news, sports coverage and talk shows on issues relating to and affecting the black and Caribbean population.

In the GTA and beyond, we are also looking forward to hearing more music with heart and a lot of soul. On the FM dial, that is G98.7.

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#### BARNEY DANSON AND REG ALCOCK

**Hon. Bob Rae (Toronto Centre, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, this House, the Liberal Party and Canada have lost in the last few days two fine and unforgettable people.

Barney Danson was a member of this House for 16 years. He was a popular minister in many portfolios, particularly the minister of defence, a veteran of the Second World War of great distinction and courage, and a man of great good humour and good will. He passed away peacefully last night surrounded by his family.

Reg Alcock was a member of this House from 1993 to 2006 and a minister in the Martin government. He returned to teaching in recent years and continued to consult widely on issues of public policy. He lived his life with gusto and extraordinary energy and died suddenly last week in Winnipeg.

Barney and Reg shared something greater than their party affiliation, which they wore with great pride; they were politicians and public servants and proud of that as well. They knew it to be a life not without difficulty, but a life of good humour, of great effort and warm fellowship.

Let us put partisanship aside for a moment and say that these were good men. They served their country well and their communities with great pride and great affection.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

#### GOVERNOR GENERAL'S AWARD IN COMMEMORATION OF THE PERSONS CASE

**Ms. Lois Brown (Newmarket—Aurora, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, this year marks the 90th anniversary of the “persons” case. In October 1929, a group of determined, forward-thinking women from the Prairies, today known as the Famous Five, rallied and won the right for women to be recognized as persons before the law.

That historic decision reversed the position that had been held until that time that women were not legally persons and therefore could not be appointed to the Senate.

Today, the Governor General's Award in Commemoration of the Persons Case was presented to five outstanding individuals who embody the pioneering spirit of the Famous Five. I would like to join all Canadian women in congratulating and thanking these women, as well as all women who work to improve Canadian communities.

• (1415)

[English]

#### Statements by Members

#### REG ALCOCK

**Mr. Pat Martin (Winnipeg Centre, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and pay tribute to the memory of a friend and colleague, the former member for Winnipeg South and former president of the Treasury Board, the hon. Reg Alcock.

Reg served in the House of Commons from 1993 to 2006 after serving in the Manitoba provincial legislature. He earned the respect of colleagues from all parties as a decent and civil politician whose competence and intelligence gave him the self-confidence to be gracious and generous in his dealings both inside and outside the chamber.

Uniquely qualified to be the president of the Treasury board with a master's degree in public administration from Harvard, he had a special aptitude for honing the delivery of government services. He believed firmly that e-government would be egalitarian government, and he championed and pioneered many of the innovations that deliver services online today.

Among his other achievements, he was the founder and first chair of the Standing Committee on Government Operations. He was a champion of open government and reform to access to information. He created a school of public service management. He was instrumental in securing the financing for the pride of Winnipeg, the Canadian Museum for Human Rights.

Reg Alcock represented the very best in public life. He served with distinction as an MLA, an MP, a cabinet minister, and as a senior political minister for Manitoba. He performed all these duties with dignity and professionalism, courtesy and respect.

We mourn his all too early passing and we extend our heartfelt condolences to his wife Karen, and his three children, Sarah, Matthew and Cristina.

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#### CITIZENSHIP WEEK

**Mr. Deepak Obhrai (Calgary East, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, it is with great pleasure that I rise today to inform the House that this week is Citizenship Week in Canada.

Our citizenship defines our rights and our responsibilities to one another. It is a shared commitment to our country's core beliefs in freedom, democracy, human rights and the rule of law, values which we all hold dear and which serve as a beacon for other nations.

There is perhaps no better way to remind us of just how valuable our citizenship is than to witness the pride and joy of new Canadians as they take the oath of citizenship. I encourage Canadians to attend the over 60 special ceremonies taking place across the country this week.

During Citizenship Week I encourage all Canadians to reaffirm their citizenship and reflect on what it means to be a citizen of Canada, the greatest country in the world.

*Oral Questions***ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS***[English]***OFFICIAL LANGUAGES**

**The Speaker:** I wish to inform the House that due to an administrative error, a report was not tabled during routine proceedings this morning.

*[Translation]*

Accordingly, I have the honour, pursuant to section 66 of the Official Languages Act, to lay upon the table the annual report of the Commissioner of Official Languages for the period from April 1, 2010, to March 31, 2011.

*[English]*

Pursuant to Standing Order 108(3)(f), this report has been permanently referred to the Standing Committee on Official Languages.

*[Translation]*

I regret any inconvenience this may have caused hon. members.

**ORAL QUESTIONS***[English]***THE ECONOMY**

**Mrs. Nycole Turmel (Hull—Aylmer, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, instead of answering the concerns raised by the Occupy movement, the Conservatives are boasting that Canada's level of inequality is better than others, but the very conservative Conference Board has a different take: Canada has the highest increase of inequality of 16 peer nations, including the United States.

Surely the Prime Minister is aware of this. Instead of bragging about its record, where is the plan to reduce inequality in Canada?

**Right Hon. Stephen Harper (Prime Minister, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, as this government has said repeatedly, our focus is on jobs and growth. I would take this opportunity to note the job creation figures last month, which indicate that Canada has now created over 650,000 jobs since the recession. This is of course one of the best records in the developed world.

We have important measures that are before the House right now to continue making sure we have jobs and opportunities for all Canadians so they all participate in Canada's recovery.

● (1420)

*[Translation]*

**Mrs. Nycole Turmel (Leader of the Opposition, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, in the past 10 years, more than 30% of economic gains went to 1% of the population, the wealthiest people. That is the result of the fiscal policies adopted by the Conservatives, and the Liberals before them. The middle class is becoming poorer, fewer people are working, the gap between rich and poor is widening, and profitable big business is receiving billions of dollars in tax cuts.

Is the Prime Minister aware of the inequality he is creating in the country?

**Right Hon. Stephen Harper (Prime Minister, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, we have reduced taxes for all Canadians. In any event, the NDP, because of its ideology, voted against tax cuts, including those for the poor.

The Canadian economy has created more than 650,000 jobs since the recession. That is the best performance in the developed world, and that is how we are ensuring that Canadians participate in the economy and the economic recovery.

**Mrs. Nycole Turmel (Leader of the Opposition, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, the government is mocking Canadians when it says that 650,000 new jobs have been created since the recession. That is false and the Prime Minister knows it. That is why the unemployment rate is higher now than before the recession. That is why the unemployment rate is rising and the employment rate is declining. The Prime Minister should stop deceiving everyone and tell us the truth.

Where is the job creation plan?

**Right Hon. Stephen Harper (Prime Minister, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the figures I gave are correct. Everyone knows that. We have brought before the House other measures to create more jobs. However, just last night, the NDP again voted against these job creation measures.

*[English]*

The NDP seems to misunderstand its role when it stands up and votes against job creation measures. It is not supposed to just occupy the House. It is supposed to do something for the Canadian people.

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**CANADIAN WHEAT BOARD**

**Mr. Pat Martin (Winnipeg Centre, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, the Canadian Wheat Board is the largest and most successful grain marketing company in the world. It is a Canadian success story with a proven track record of providing the best possible returns for farmers and minimizing their risk.

We can prove our arguments with detailed, empirical evidence, but there is no business case for dismantling the Canadian Wheat Board. There has never been one shred of evidence that farmers will be better off without the Wheat Board.

In these uncertain economic times, how can the government be so reckless and irresponsible as to turn the prairie farm economy on its head without even doing a cost benefit analysis?



*Oral Questions*

**Hon. Gerry Ritz (Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food and Minister for the Canadian Wheat Board, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the first thing the member for Winnipeg Centre should do is check his research. The Wheat Board is actually the third largest exporter just in Canada. Viterra is first, Cargill is second and then it is the Canadian Wheat Board. That is how much it has slipped in value to western Canadian farmers. That is why we are nowhere on solid ground with western Canadian farmers. Moving ahead with marketing freedom will get that done, despite that member.

**Mr. Pat Martin (Winnipeg Centre, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, the Americans certainly understand what an advantage the Wheat Board is to farmers because 13 times they went to the WTO and complained that it was an unfair trade practice it was such an advantage, and 13 times the WTO ruled that there was nothing unfair about Canadian farmers acting collectively to stand up in their own best interests.

If the Wheat Board is not such an advantage to prairie farmers, why is the American agri-food business so eager to kill it and, the big question is, why is the government willing to do its dirty work for it?

**Hon. Gerry Ritz (Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food and Minister for the Canadian Wheat Board, CPC):** It is very interesting, Mr. Speaker, that the first person out of the gate announcing value added in western Canada is a western Canadian. Murad Al-Katib, with Alliance Grain Traders, has announced a \$50 million investment for durum production in the lower part of Saskatchewan where the durum is grown. He will create 60 value-added jobs. I do not know why the member opposite is against farmers and against jobs in western Canada.

\* \* \*

• (1425)

**TAXATION**

**Hon. Bob Rae (Toronto Centre, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Prime Minister.

One practical step that could be taken to deal with the lack of progressivity in the tax system, which, by the way, was referred to yesterday by the Minister of Finance as a big plus for Canada, would be to make the non-refundable tax credits refundable. Those tax credits apply to kids who are taking piano lessons, kids who are on the margins. Their parents are so poor that they cannot pay taxes.

Why will the Prime Minister not change the bill before the House and ensure those kids can get those benefits?

**Right Hon. Stephen Harper (Prime Minister, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, it is interesting to hear the NDP call for the embellishment of tax credits that it voted against.

**An hon. member:** We are Liberal.

**Right Hon. Stephen Harper:** I should say the Liberals. I get confused.

There are a number of additional tax reduction measures before the House that are very important to small business and to job creation across this country, strongly supported by stakeholders. I would encourage the NDP and the Liberal Party to stop opposing those measures.

*[Translation]*

**Hon. Bob Rae (Toronto Centre, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, one thing is clear and that is that, despite the Prime Minister's confusion, when the Conservative Party has the opportunity to make a change that will make the tax system far more progressive, it does not want to make that change.

I will repeat the same question: why not give tax credits to the poorest people in the country? That is how to make the system more progressive. That is what the government needs to do.

**Right Hon. Stephen Harper (Prime Minister, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the leader of the Liberal Party is talking about tax credits that his party voted against. These are important measures for Canadian families. Other measures that are important to job creation, the business community and SMEs are now before this House. I encourage the Liberal Party to reverse its position and support these tax credits, which are very important for the Canadian economy.

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*[English]***CANADIAN WHEAT BOARD**

**Hon. Bob Rae (Toronto Centre, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister's position with respect to the Wheat Board becomes even less understandable when the American ambassador announced today at lunch that there would be no change in buy America and that buy America would be the policy there.

We have a thickening of the border, a continuing attack on the marine tax and other continuing attacks on the Canadian economy and the Prime Minister at this moment decides to make the biggest, single, unilateral trade concession it could make; this by a government that has been trying to get rid of the Wheat Board for 15 years.

The Prime Minister should be ashamed of himself.

**Right Hon. Stephen Harper (Prime Minister, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the logic of the Liberal Party, judging from that question, is that, because the Americans want to buy certain products in the United States, we should not allow Canadian farmers to sell their own products.

The Liberal Party should ask itself why it does not have a single representative whose riding is predominantly in rural western Canada. It is because it does not listen to western farmers. This is something western farmers have been needing and demanding for decades, and that day is finally here.

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*[Translation]***RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT**

**Ms. Hélène LeBlanc (LaSalle—Émard, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, a group of experts has said that \$3 billion is handed out every year in tax credits for research and development and that this does not have any significant impact on economic growth and business development. Yet the government continues to provide ineffective tax credits.

*Oral Questions*

Will this government recognize that it would be better off creating a plan to help businesses innovate and create jobs?

[English]

**Hon. Gary Goodyear (Minister of State (Science and Technology) (Federal Economic Development Agency for Southern Ontario), CPC):** Mr. Speaker, our government is focused on encouraging businesses to do more research and development because not only will that help the business itself but it will create more jobs for Canadians, and that is what we want.

We did launch a panel to review our programs to see how we could make them better to get more results for Canadians. This is very important to Canadians so we will look at the report and consider all the recommendations quite seriously.

[Translation]

**Ms. Hélène LeBlanc (LaSalle—Émard, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, according to *The Globe and Mail*, nearly one-third of funds allocated to research and development is used to pay consultants, because the claims process is extremely complicated. These billions of dollars are also used to review claims that are questionable or even misleading.

When will this government come up with a plan to create innovative jobs instead of lining the pockets of consultants?

• (1430)

[English]

**Hon. Gary Goodyear (Minister of State (Science and Technology) (Federal Economic Development Agency for Southern Ontario), CPC):** Mr. Speaker, that is exactly why we launched the panel.

If we can get businesses to do more research and development, develop new products or a new process on which they make a product now, or perhaps find a new market for existing products, that will create high-paying, high-value jobs for Canadians. That will improve the quality of living for Canadians. That is what the government wants. That is why we are looking at the panel.

Last night, the NDP voted against improving the quality of life for Canadians.

[Translation]

**Mr. Peter Julian (Burnaby—New Westminster, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, the Jenkins report released yesterday confirmed that this government's innovation strategy in its research and development support policy is a failure. This government is the worst performer among major industrialized countries as far as direct public investment in research and development is concerned. This government is a laggard in terms of the number of patents issued. It is ranked last in terms of the number of doctoral graduates and is among the worst performers when it comes to businesses' financial contribution to research and development.

What is the government going to do to finally address this pitiful situation?

[English]

**Hon. Gary Goodyear (Minister of State (Science and Technology) (Federal Economic Development Agency for Southern Ontario), CPC):** Mr. Speaker, as I just mentioned, we did

launch an R and D panel to review all of the government's programs that encourage small and large businesses to do more research and development. The panel reported yesterday. It is a great report. We are looking at it. It is a very serious issue for Canadians. We will give it serious consideration.

We will improve the quality of life of Canadians because that is what we on this side of the House want.

**Mr. Peter Julian (Burnaby—New Westminster, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, on this side of the House, we believe in research and development and sound industrial policy. On that side of the House, the facts speak for themselves.

The government has failed on patent development. It has failed on supporting PhDs. It is pouring billions into blind corporate tax cuts and costly tax credits that have failed to stimulate research and development. Canada is last in direct R and D public investment among all industrialized countries.

Will the government commit now to increasing direct R and D public investment? We have said it. The reports are saying it. When will the government do the right thing?

**Hon. Gary Goodyear (Minister of State (Science and Technology) (Federal Economic Development Agency for Southern Ontario), CPC):** Mr. Speaker, obviously, the government wants to encourage businesses to do more research and development. That is where the high paying, high quality jobs of the future will come from.

I thank the member for finally getting interested in science and technology, research and development, because in his party's election platform it was mentioned nowhere.

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**INTERNATIONAL TRADE**

**Mr. Robert Chisholm (Dartmouth—Cole Harbour, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, we are increasingly concerned that the government is selling out Canadians in order to push through a flawed deal with Europe. However, members should not take our word for it. I will quote Anna Robasch, a Danish member of the European parliament, who said, "At the moment Europe will be able to export more than what Canada will be exporting".

When will the government admit that it is losing out in these negotiations and start putting the interests of Canadians first?

**Mr. Gerald Keddy (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of International Trade, for the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency and for the Atlantic Gateway, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, that question only proves once again that the NDP is ideologically opposed to free trade.

On our side of the House, we welcome the ninth round of negotiations as the benefits to Canadian workers and businesses through a free trade agreement with the EU are expected to be enormous: a 20% boost in bilateral trade; a \$12 billion annual boost to Canada's economy; 80,000 new jobs for Canadian workers; and \$1,000 average extra income for Canadian families.



**Mr. Robert Chisholm (Dartmouth—Cole Harbour, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, the problem is that the minister and the government cannot see because of their rose-coloured glasses.

We need some straight talk on the impacts of this deal. European officials are quite happy to tell us what is going on. One European official boasted that Europe stands to gain while Canada loses. He said, “there will be some losers, there are always losers”.

Why is the government content with this loser status? Why will the government not start giving the straight goods to Canadians and stand up for them?

• (1435)

**Mr. Gerald Keddy (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of International Trade, for the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency and for the Atlantic Gateway, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, there was some chattering across the way and I did not hear the end of the question but I will give what I expect the member is looking for as an answer.

Some hon. members may not have realized it but we received a strong mandate from Canadians, which is why we have a majority government and why we are pursuing free trade agreements that will benefit Canadians, benefit Canadian workers and supply Canadian jobs to Canadians who need those jobs.

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#### AIRLINE SAFETY

**Ms. Olivia Chow (Trinity—Spadina, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, Porter Airlines was nearly grounded by Transport Canada for failing to comply with air safety rules and yet, despite this extreme measure, the minister refuses to say what went wrong and whether the public was in any danger.

Why will the minister not tell Canadians what safety rules were violated by Porter Airlines? Why the extreme measures? Canadians have a right to know. Why is the minister hiding the truth from the public?

**Hon. Denis Lebel (Minister of Transport, Infrastructure and Communities and Minister of the Economic Development Agency of Canada for the Regions of Quebec, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I do not accept the premise of that question.

Transport Canada's top priorities are safety and security. Porter Airlines is in compliance with the Canadian aviation regulations. In 2008, Transport Canada's inspectors identified a minor concern with Porter's maintenance quality assurance program. The company fixed the problem and everything is fine. Porter is doing a good job in Canada.

**Mr. Dennis Bevington (Western Arctic, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, northern Canadians have been severely challenged by a spate of plane crashes in recent weeks killing 16 people. The government has failed to live up to its plans to beef up Transport Canada's team of safety inspectors. In fact, the number of inspectors has actually declined in the last two years.

Air travel is a way of life for northerners and many other Canadians. They should not have to roll the dice when they board a plane.

#### Oral Questions

Why is the government dragging its feet on air safety? When will it live up to its promises and get serious about keeping—

**The Speaker:** The hon. Minister of Transport.

[Translation]

**Hon. Denis Lebel (Minister of Transport, Infrastructure and Communities and Minister of the Economic Development Agency of Canada for the Regions of Quebec, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, that is completely incorrect. There is no justification for attacking the aviation safety of a nation that takes such matters so seriously. Our inspectors are extremely competent. Transport Canada does exceptional work and enjoys worldwide acclaim, and this member is attacking the integrity of Transport Canada workers. I cannot accept that. It is improper.

**Mr. Jamie Nicholls (Vaudreuil—Soulanges, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, let us discuss safety in general. There were threats made to ground Porter because the carrier did not comply with Transport Canada's safety regulations. Transport Canada refuses to say why or to indicate whether passenger safety was jeopardized.

This government is incapable of acting in a transparent manner. Whether it is a question of costs of bills or even international agreements, the public has the right to know.

Why is the government not protecting Canadians instead of hiding the truth from them?

**Hon. Denis Lebel (Minister of Transport, Infrastructure and Communities and Minister of the Economic Development Agency of Canada for the Regions of Quebec, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, instead of inciting public fear, the member should have listened to the answer that I gave earlier.

Aviation safety is Transport Canada's top priority. Porter Airlines complies with Canadian regulations. In 2008, Transport Canada inspectors were concerned about Porter's maintenance quality assurance program. The company has complied with all Transport Canada regulations. Porter is a great company. Transport Canada continues to carry out regular inspections.

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#### DEMOCRATIC REFORM

**Hon. Stéphane Dion (Saint-Laurent—Cartierville, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, it is only fair that the House add seats for British Columbia, Alberta and Ontario, provinces that are under-represented here.

However, on its first attempt at democratic reform, the government left out Ontario and insulted its premier. On its second attempt, it left out Quebec, making it the only province with a relative decline in population to be under-represented.

Will the Minister of State for Democratic Reform finally table a bill that makes sense, and will he do it soon so that the House can study it?

*Oral Questions*

● (1440)

*[English]*

**Hon. Tim Uppal (Minister of State (Democratic Reform), CPC):** Mr. Speaker, our government made three distinct promises concerning representation in the House of Commons. First, we would increase the number of seats now and in the future to better reflect population growth in British Columbia, Ontario and Alberta. Second, we would protect the number of seats for smaller provinces. Finally, we would protect the proportional representation of Quebec according to population.

Those are our three commitments and we intend to bring forward legislation shortly respecting those commitments.

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*[Translation]***CANADA POST**

**Hon. Denis Coderre (Bourassa, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of State for Transport. We have learned that Canada Post is currently making significant cuts to work hours in post offices in Canada.

The problem is that Quebec is being asked, unfairly and disproportionately, to cut more. Out of 150,000 hours of cuts planned, 53% are scheduled for Quebec, when it is 4% to 8% for the other provinces, on average. That means serious hardship in the regions. And doing this means that Canada Post is disregarding the suggestions made by the Fédération québécoise des municipalités.

Canada Post management is doing this. Why?

*[English]*

**Hon. Steven Fletcher (Minister of State (Transport), CPC):** Mr. Speaker, Canada Post is responsible for delivering mail to Canadians. We have done everything to ensure that the service charter that this government introduced is fulfilled, and Canadians will get their mail and Canadian businesses will be able to do their business.

I would like to point out that the opposition parties are the very parties that tried to prevent the government from ensuring that Canadians get their mail in a timely manner. The opposition parties should look at their own records.

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**G8 SUMMIT**

**Hon. John McCallum (Markham—Unionville, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, yesterday I asked the President of the Treasury Board, in a Tweet, why the labour minister could speak for herself under attack in the House, while he cowered behind the foreign affairs minister.

He answered. He actually answered, albeit by Tweet, that the foreign affairs minister responded because he was the one in charge of G8 funding.

My question is for the Treasury Board President. Does this mean he will not answer G8 questions at his long-awaited appearance before committee?

**Hon. John Baird (Minister of Foreign Affairs, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I know that the President of the Treasury Board is excited to

go to committee just because the member for Marham—Unionville will be there asking questions. We look forward to his participation in those committee hearings. I, myself, am prepared to come as well.

*[Translation]*

**Mr. Alexandre Boulerice (Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, let us see whether the Conservatives' new CEO knows how to manage. The member responsible for the department of Muskoka must explain to the House, and not in committee when he decides to do it, why he intervened in the Gravenhurst project. Why did he put that project in the building Canada fund? It is not just the NDP asking questions. At this very moment, the project is under police investigation.

Is the minister for Muskoka going to show that he has more backbone than the Liberal Party and rise to reply?

*[English]*

**Mr. John Baird (Minister of Foreign Affairs, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I deeply regret the tone the member has taken in his question. I do note that he has not had the courage to make any accusations against the President of the Treasury Board outside of this place, and there is a reason for that. It is because there is no substance to those allegations.

**Mr. Charlie Angus (Timmins—James Bay, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I would invite the hon. President of the Treasury Board to step out any time to talk about it, but he would have to stand up first.

Canadians put a lot of faith in the Auditor General to hold the government to account, and he broke faith with the Canadian people when he hid documents from the Auditor General, when the Auditor General was trying to get to the bottom of this slush fund.

We now learn he has a new way of undermining the Auditor General, which is to cut its budget. This will mean fewer reports, fewer issues being investigated, just at a time when the Muskoka maverick gets his fingers on the booty of the Canadian taxpayer.

Is this the lesson, to attack the Auditor General?

● (1445)

**Hon. Tony Clement (President of the Treasury Board and Minister for the Federal Economic Development Initiative for Northern Ontario, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member for the question. Of course, it has been 2,667 days since he promised that he would vote against the long gun registry. He failed to deliver on that.

The Auditor General volunteered to participate in the review of its spending. Let us be clear. This is a separate review from the deficit reduction action plan. This was made voluntarily by the Auditor General, and members on this side of the House applaud the interim Auditor General for making that case.

**Mr. Charlie Angus (Timmins—James Bay, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, after 131 days of taking a dive, that is as good as it gets: guns. That is like trying to beat me to death with popcorn.

The problem the minister needs to note is that if he looks guilty and acts guilty, people are going to realize that he may be guilty. The Auditor General said the rules were broken. The Auditor General said it is Parliament's job to investigate.



Will the government commit to a full parliamentary investigation to figure out how this man managed to take \$50 million of border infrastructure and blow the money on untendered contracts in his riding?

**Some hon. members:** Oh, oh!

**Hon. John Baird (Minister of Foreign Affairs, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, all that booing is going to hurt my feelings and it will also do nothing for my self-esteem.

The Auditor General has thoroughly looked into this matter. She wrote a report to Parliament. This government co-operated fully with her in the conduct of drafting her recommendations to Parliament. This government has accepted all the recommendations that the Auditor General has presented on how we can be more open, more transparent to Parliament.

[Translation]

**Mr. Guy Caron (Rimouski-Neigette—Témiscouata—Les Basques, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, let us continue on the question of transparency. The Standing Committee on Public Accounts, which is dominated by the Conservatives, did not adopt a motion to study the Auditor General's past reports. To top it off, that was done behind closed doors.

There are reports that show us the full extent of the mismanagement of public funds by the Conservatives: millions of dollars wasted on helicopters and corruption in the Office of the Public Sector Integrity Commissioner. Before going behind closed doors, a Conservative member on the committee justified his opposition to this by saying that a lot had changed since the election.

Why will this government not let the Standing Committee on Public Accounts do its job? What does it—

**The Speaker:** The hon. Leader of the Government in the House of Commons.

[English]

**Hon. Peter Van Loan (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, our government lets committees be master of their own destiny because they are.

What we see from this side, that keeps being voted against by members on the other side, are measures to keep spending under control, to reduce taxes so Canadians have more dollars in their pockets, and measures to ensure our economy continues to grow and create jobs.

That is the focus of this government. We have delivered on accountability and transparency, and now we are delivering on economic growth.

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#### CANADIAN WHEAT BOARD

**Mr. Earl Dreeshen (Red Deer, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, earlier today the Minister of Agriculture introduced a historic bill in this House. The marketing freedom for grain farmers act would fundamentally transform agriculture on the Prairies by giving farmers the freedom to market their grain when and where they choose, and to what buyer they choose.

#### Oral Questions

Farmers want economic opportunity. Farmers want freedom. Farmers want this legislation to succeed.

Would the Minister of Agriculture tell us what this historic piece of legislation would mean for farmers?

**Hon. Gerry Ritz (Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food and Minister for the Canadian Wheat Board, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the member for Red Deer for his great work. As a farmer, he knows the value this legislation would deliver, giving marketing freedom to western Canadian farmers. Once passed, this bill would allow prairie farmers to seek their own contracts, the same as their friends and relatives have in Ontario. That is called fairness.

The Canadian Wheat Board would remain a voluntary pool in this piece of legislation, a tremendous option for farmers to use should they decide to. We encourage the opposition to pass this bill swiftly, to send market certainty and the right signals to farmers so they know what to plant next spring.

**Ms. Niki Ashton (Churchill, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, back in March the Minister of Agriculture said he would not scrap the Wheat Board unless western farmers were in favour of it. Over the summer, western producers voted and spoke out in favour of the single desk.

Why is the government failing to listen to the voices of western farmers? Why is it so deeply in the pocket of big ag and when will it stop taking the west for granted?

• (1450)

**Hon. Gerry Ritz (Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food and Minister for the Canadian Wheat Board, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, it is because we take the mandate that western Canadians gave us on May 2 very seriously and we campaigned hard on this issue.

I would like to ask the member for Churchill, is she going to support this bill, since it would do everything for Churchill that was required and what it was asking for?

There would be \$5 million each year for the next five years to help with its transition; \$4 million to upgrade the port facility for better loading; and an extension of the \$4 million package from western diversification.

This is all great news. The mayor of Churchill, Mike Spence, is totally in favour of this. Will that member stand and support this bill?

[Translation]

**Ms. Niki Ashton (Churchill, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, we are well aware that the loss of the Canadian Wheat Board is a loss for all of western Canada.

The Canadian Wheat Board gives farmers and people in western and northern Canada prices and rates that the big agri-food businesses cannot equal, particularly during hard economic times. And yet the minister seems to have no problem shutting down one of the most successful Canadian agencies.

*Oral Questions*

When will the Minister stop ignoring the voices of people in the west, of farmers in the west, and when will he stop—

**The Speaker:** Order. The hon. Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food.

[English]

**Hon. Gerry Ritz (Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food and Minister for the Canadian Wheat Board, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, as I said, the people of western Canada, including farmers, sent all of us here to ensure we follow through on our campaign commitments to give marketing freedom to western Canadian farmers. They deserve that right. They have earned that privilege. They have shown us, marketing canola globally, marketing pulses and other special crops globally, that they have the expertise.

What they need to do is ensure that the members opposite follow through and get this passed before the end of this calendar year, so that the new entity wheat board would be able to succeed and western Canadian farmers would have the right and the obligation to succeed as well.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

**OFFICIAL LANGUAGES**

**Mr. Yvon Godin (Acadie—Bathurst, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister's reaction to the most recent report of the Commissioner of Official Languages will decide the fate of the official languages in this country. The report clearly states that the Minister of Official Languages and the President of the Treasury Board are not complying with the law. All federal institutions must obey the law and respect official language communities when making decisions.

Will the Prime Minister react promptly to the report of the Commissioner of Official Languages?

**Hon. James Moore (Minister of Canadian Heritage and Official Languages, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, we will certainly react, as we have done in the past. I would like to quote the report of the Commissioner of Official Languages, which I have here. It says that our government “made it possible to initiate or continue numerous projects aimed at promoting linguistic duality to all Canadians, fostering the economic development of the communities, and improving their situations, especially in the areas of health care, education, immigration and culture.” This report highlights the fact that our government is making unprecedented investments in protecting and celebrating Canada's two official languages.

**Mr. Yvon Godin (Acadie—Bathurst, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, vague answers like that do nothing to protect our country's two official languages. The proposals set out in the commissioner's report represent the bare minimum the government should be doing. If the Prime Minister refuses to follow up on the report's proposals, that will prove that he opposes the Official Languages Act.

Is the Prime Minister ready to pass a bill, as called for by the Commissioner of Official Languages? That is in his report.

[English]

**Hon. James Moore (Minister of Canadian Heritage and Official Languages, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I will answer in the other official language to avoid any vagueness.

Quoting directly from the report, which states:

The Department [of Canadian Heritage] [has] demonstrate[d] its commitment to the Official Languages Act by providing its services in both official languages at all times, and especially by making full compliance with Part VII of the Act a...priority. Canadian Heritage systematically consults official language communities through working groups and federal councils, and when developing cooperation agreements with provinces and territories. Not only does the Department have a thorough understanding of the needs of official language communities, it also takes these needs into account when designing and implementing programs.

Not vague, it is direct. We are getting the job done.

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**JUSTICE**

**Mr. Sean Casey (Charlottetown, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the Conservative government's crime bill adds longer sentences for drug offences, increases mandatory minimums and cuts conditional sentences.

**Some hon. members:** Oh, oh!

**The Speaker:** Order, please. I would ask hon. members to applaud when he is finished asking the question not during the preamble, so the House can actually hear the substance of the question.

The hon. member for Charlottetown.

**Mr. Sean Casey:** Mr. Speaker, however, even the toughest anti-crime advocates in America say that this strategy is just plain wrong. Even the staunchest Conservative Republicans in Texas are repealing mandatory minimums and increasing drug treatment programs because they slash crimes at a tenth of the cost.

Why is the government ignoring the evidence and wasting billions of taxpayer dollars on a crime strategy that just will not work?

● (1455)

**Hon. Rob Nicholson (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, unfortunately there was a misleading report on CBC last night. In fact, the bill that we have before Parliament specifically excludes drug treatment courts that are already in existence in Canada.

If Texas and other places are emulating or copying the Canadian experience, that is a beautiful thing and anything we can do to help them, we would be glad to do.



**Ms. Joyce Murray (Vancouver Quadra, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, under the Texas government's new approach of less jail time and more treatment, the rate of prisoners reoffending has dropped by 75%. In contrast, Conservative crime laws are already putting thousands more people into overcrowded jails and 85% cannot get the treatment programs they need, plus funding for treatment has been slashed while security costs soar.

Why is the government fast-tracking a bad bill that even Texans know will deliver more crime, more victims, less justice and spiralling costs?

**Hon. Vic Toews (Minister of Public Safety, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, unfortunately the member is relying on a misleading CBC report.

The incarceration rate in Texas is proportionately five times higher than in Canada. In fact, the safe streets and communities act includes specific exemptions for drug treatment courts that are already operating across Canada. As the Minister of Justice indicated, if Texas wants to follow our example in respect of the drug treatment courts, I welcome that initiative.

Those members should vote in respect of the bill that we have before the House.

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#### FISHERIES AND OCEANS

**Mr. Fin Donnelly (New Westminster—Coquitlam, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, infectious salmon anemia has been diagnosed in sockeye smolts in the Pacific. This is the same virus that infected and wiped out almost 70% of farmed salmon in Chile.

We do not know the long-term effects on wild salmon or how long this virus has been present in the Pacific waters. What is the government doing to investigate this serious threat to our salmon fishery?

**Hon. Keith Ashfield (Minister of Fisheries and Oceans and Minister for the Atlantic Gateway, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, our government understands the importance of salmon for British Columbia economically, historically and culturally. That is why the Prime Minister established the Cohen Commission of Inquiry in 2009. I encourage the member to support the work of Justice Cohen and the Cohen Commission.

**Mr. Fin Donnelly (New Westminster—Coquitlam, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, the government's silence on fisheries is deafening. Instead of providing answers, there is no communication from the department and scientists remain muzzled. Conservatives are gutting the DFO and cutting funding to fisheries conservation councils. Their policy seems to be "hear no evil, see no evil, speak no evil" and they hope these problems go away. They will not.

When will the minister agree to a full and transparent investigation of this serious issue and threat to our fisheries?

**Hon. Keith Ashfield (Minister of Fisheries and Oceans and Minister for the Atlantic Gateway, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, a strategic review was an opportunity for the department to assess performance of its programs. It also allowed us to ensure that we were responding to the priorities of Canadians. We have the responsibility to spend taxpayer money prudently and where it will do the most good. We

#### Oral Questions

must ensure that government programs are efficient, effective and achieving the expected results of Canadians.

DFO is making steady progress in modernizing and improving our program and policy approach to meet the needs of Canadians today and in the future.

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#### FOREIGN AFFAIRS

**Mr. Joe Daniel (Don Valley East, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I was dismayed to learn last week some of the details surrounding the apparent plot by Iran to assassinate the Saudi Arabian ambassador to Washington. While the plot was thankfully foiled this time, the threat that Iran poses to the world remains.

Could the Minister of Foreign Affairs please inform the House about measures that Canada is taking to respond to Iran's latest affront to international law?

**Hon. John Baird (Minister of Foreign Affairs, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, Canada finds Iran's actions absolutely and totally unacceptable. We condemn them without reservation.

Last week I committed to working with our international partners in considering the consequences for such actions. Today, Canada is imposing sanctions on five additional Iranian nationals. Four are members of the Iranian national guard. These sanctions are on top of others already in place against Iran.

As the Prime Minister said last week, this regime in Tehran represents probably the most significant threat to the world, to global peace and security and I completely agree.

● (1500)

**Hon. Jim Karygiannis (Scarborough—Agincourt, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, Majeed Uddin Ahmed and his family have been in a Saudi jail for almost a month. His two Canadian children are in jail. Their family in Canada is gravely concerned and has said, "It took three weeks for a Canadian official to simply visit the family from the time they were taken away. We have had no contact with my brother for a month now and his daughter is suffering illness and needs medical attention. Please help".

When will the minister get off her seat and offer some help? If not, will she step aside and let the Prime Minister appoint someone else to help the family?

**Hon. Diane Ablonczy (Minister of State of Foreign Affairs (Americas and Consular Affairs), CPC):** Mr. Speaker, in spite of his bombast, I can assure the member that Canadian consular officials are in fact providing the detained Canadian, his family and their relatives with consular assistance as requested both here and in Saudi Arabia.

We have been granted access to see the family. We will continue to engage with Saudi officials about this family's case and provide it with the support it has requested.

*Oral Questions**[Translation]***POVERTY**

**Ms. Charmaine Borg (Terrebonne—Blainville, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, poverty is no longer just an inner city problem. Pockets of poverty are appearing in the suburbs of cities across Canada. Inequality continues to grow in the regions. Because of isolation and under-funded community organizations, the suburbs are not properly prepared to address poverty. Meanwhile, the government has no action plan to fight poverty. Bill C-13 does not propose any solutions to improve the situation.

When will the Conservatives bring forward a real plan to fight poverty?

**Hon. Diane Finley (Minister of Human Resources and Skills Development, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, during the global recession, we introduced measures to help people who had lost their jobs find new positions and get training in order to get the skills they needed to find new jobs. We also introduced several measures to help all Canadians, such as lowering taxes—particularly the GST—and several other programs. Unfortunately, the NDP voted against all—

**The Speaker:** Order. The hon. member for Vancouver South.

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*[English]***JUSTICE**

**Ms. Wai Young (Vancouver South, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, Canadians are concerned about crime. This is one reason why our government received a strong mandate to keep our streets and communities safe.

Bill C-10, the safe streets and communities act, contains targeted measures designed to disrupt criminal enterprise, while ensuring that those who sell drugs to children serve sentences which reflect the severity of their crime.

Contrary to a recent report by CBC, Bill C-10 contains specific measures to help those who are unfortunately addicted to drugs.

Could the minister inform the House on how Bill C-10 takes a balanced approach to tackling crime?

**Hon. Rob Nicholson (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the hon. member is quite correct. Canadians are quite concerned about crime. Contrary to the report, as I pointed out, there are specific exemptions in the bill with respect to drug treatment courts.

We have also been very clear that if individuals get into the business of selling drugs to children or they bring illegal drugs into this country, they will go to jail, and that is what Canadians want.

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*[Translation]***VETERANS**

**Ms. Annick Papillon (Québec, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, our soldiers and veterans are not a priority to this government. How else can we explain the \$226 million cut to the Veterans Affairs budget, mainly in financial support for former soldiers?

We also learned recently that the new veterans charter would penalize our reservists, who face the same risks in the field as our regular soldiers.

Why did the minister decide that our reservists will receive half as much from now on?

**Hon. Steven Blaney (Minister of Veterans Affairs, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, on the contrary, we are investing in our veterans. With the new veterans charter, we are investing an additional \$189 million for our veterans. However, there is a reality we must all face in the House and that is that our Korean War and World War II veterans are aging and, unfortunately, will be passing away in greater numbers over the coming decades.

I invite the hon. member to support this government's initiatives. She can support our "Helmets to Hardhats" initiative to encourage our soldiers. She can do so—

● (1505)

**The Speaker:** Order. The hon. member for Saanich—Gulf Islands.

\* \* \*

*[English]***DEMOCRATIC REFORM**

**Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP):** Mr. Speaker, earlier today I shared with the Minister of State for Democratic Reform the newsletter of the Saanich Gulf Islands Conservative Party.

I am so proud to represent the people of Saanich—Gulf Islands and I am sure he will be as distressed as I am by that party's transparent plan for gerrymandering in hopes of winning the riding back. They write, "If you lose South of MacKenzie, lose the Gulf Islands, lose Gordon Head, if you removed all these three areas, we would have won the last election"

Will the minister reassure us that the redistribution will be by population and not by population of Conservative voters?

**Hon. Peter Van Loan (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the statute is quite clear. It sets out a process for redistribution that is run on a non-partisan basis by independent commissions. Those will be under way in the appropriate time.

Under our legislation, we will ensure that there is a formula in place that ensures people of Saanich—Gulf Islands—or of British Columbia, in fact, and all of Canada—will have the fair representation that has long been denied to them.

\* \* \*

**PRESENCE IN GALLERY**

**The Speaker:** I would like to draw to the attention of hon. members the presence in the gallery of the Honourable David Alward, Premier of New Brunswick.

**Some hon. members:** Hear, hear!



[Translation]

**The Speaker:** I would like to draw to the attention of hon. members the presence in the gallery of the recipients of the Governor General's Awards in Commemoration of the Persons Case: Nancy Hartling, Lucie Joyal, Kim Pate, Madeline Boscoe, Sharon Donna McIvor, and Amber JoAnn Fletcher, the Youth Award recipient.

**Some hon. members:** Hear, hear!

\* \* \*

[English]

## PRIVILEGE

### LEGISLATION TO REORGANIZE THE CANADIAN WHEAT BOARD

**Hon. Peter Van Loan (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I want to speak a little further on the points that were raised earlier today related to section 47.1 of the Canadian Wheat Board Act and the question of privilege on the potential contempt allegation that was raised by the member opposite. It was the hon. member for Malpeque who raised those questions.

Our government, of course, considers the bill, which would restore freedom to Canadian farmers, to be of great importance. We returned to office after the last election and after a broad consultation with Canadians, I hasten to add, with a clear set of issues that we promised Canadians we would tackle. Establishing marketing freedom for Canadian farmers was one of those critically important issues.

At the core of my friend's submissions, the hon. gentleman asserts that there would be a breach of section 47.1 of the Canadian Wheat Board Act if that act is amended or repealed by Bill C-18 without a vote of producers. In short, Mr. Speaker, the hon. member is asking you to interpret the provisions of the statute.

As noted earlier by the Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, it is well established that questions of law are beyond the jurisdiction of the Chair. In addition to that straightforward argument, which I believe is correct and directly on point here, it may be of some benefit to have some precedents for reference. I would observe that none of the hon. members for Malpeque, Guelph or Winnipeg North referred to any Standing Orders or Speakers' rulings, and of course those rulings are much closer to coming within the Chair's jurisdiction to consider.

I would refer the House to page 261 of the second edition of *House of Commons Procedure and Practice*, which reads as follows:

—numerous Speakers have explained that it is not up to the Speaker to rule on the “constitutionality” or “legality” of measures before the House.

Mr. Speaker Lamoureux, on July 8, 1969, at page 1319 of *Journals*, ruled on that point. He stated:

I have had occasion in the past to indicate that it is not the responsibility of the Chair to rule on questions of law or on constitutional questions. This ruling has been made in many instances by previous Speakers.

On May 2, 1989, a ruling by Mr. Speaker Fraser articulated at page 1175 of *Debates* some rationale for this perspective. He stated:

The Speaker should not sit in judgment on constitutional or legal matters. That role belongs more properly to the courts and to the administration of justice. Previous Speakers have been very careful in strictly addressing themselves to matters of a

## Privilege

parliamentary or procedural nature while avoiding dealing with constitutional or legal matters.

Another ruling by Mr. Speaker Fraser on April 9, 1991, at page 19233 of *Debates*, offers a comment which I would suggest is analogous to the situation raised by the hon. member. In that case, the Chair was asked to rule whether a motion to make certain amendments to the Standing Orders contravened the Constitution and the Parliament of Canada Act. Mr. Speaker Fraser observed the following:

The Chair must avoid interpreting in any way, even indirectly, the limits set in the Constitution or the Parliament of Canada Act.

In these circumstances, I would argue that the Canadian Wheat Board Act is no different. Your predecessor, Mr. Speaker, has also made similar rulings, including those found at page 6123 of *Debates* on May 13, 2003, as well as page 4498 of *Debates* on March 23, 2005.

I would go further than that. If one is to accept the logic that has been set out by the members opposite, what they are suggesting is that one can, by passing a statute in the House, effectively fetter the future discretion of the House in passing future laws. In effect, by simply stating it is a law, they are saying that some laws stand above others and they essentially become constitutional provisions that cannot be amended by the House. Clearly, that would not be appropriate.

The precedent set by that approach would potentially create a very difficult situation to manage in the future, in the sense that any government could ensure that none of its measures could ever be repealed by a subsequent government through our democratic process simply by providing measures such as those that are referred to in section 47.1, barriers that stand in the way of modification of a statute. The fact is that Parliament reigns supreme on the question of passing statutes, and that includes amending statutes that are already in existence. The only law that stands above that is, of course, constitutional law.

Mr. Speaker, I would suggest for that reason also—that is, the practical, logical problems that would result were Parliament able to fetter the subsequent discretion of all future Parliaments in this fashion—that our democratic system would indeed be paralyzed and held back by the heavy hand of history.

● (1510)

Therefore, Mr. Speaker, I would urge you to find that the claim raised by the hon. member is beyond the jurisdiction of the Chair and that therefore no *prima facie* question of privilege can be found here.

**The Speaker:** Is the hon. member for Malpeque rising on the same point?

**Hon. Wayne Easter (Malpeque, Lib.):** Yes I am, Mr. Speaker, just to add a little further.

*Government Orders*

Parliament clearly set out in its law, passed in 1997, the right of self-determination for farmers who ship through the Canadian Wheat Board. Parliament, this place that we call a democracy, passed a law, and here we have a government not going as far as allowing, as stipulated in the law, a vote of producers. What are we to see next? Will it be that there will not be elections every four years and that it will be ten years instead, because the Prime Minister so decides, and with his massive majority passes it in the House?

We have a responsibility as parliamentarians. My point of privilege is this: I am being asked as a member of Parliament to act on a piece of legislation to disband legislation that was passed in the House to give the right to farmers of self-determination in terms of their destiny. We are asked to look at a bill that takes that right away from them. It violates their right to vote as stated under section 47.1 of the act. Parliament made a commitment, and this is indeed a very serious issue. I believe it goes to the essence of our democracy. We are taking away rights.

No one is asking you, Mr. Speaker, to look at the legality of it. You are taking my right away as a member of Parliament if you rule with the government and you are certainly taking farmers' rights away if you rule with the government, because we passed a law in 1997. If you go back to the remarks I made this morning, I quoted from the minister of the day. He very clearly laid out the intent of that legislation, which was to give primary producers the right to have a say in their own destiny.

This is an extremely serious issue, and I do not put much merit in what the House leader opposite has said.

• (1515)

**The Speaker:** I will allow the government House leader a brief opportunity to respond.

**Hon. Peter Van Loan:** Mr. Speaker, responding narrowly to the point that my friend has raised, what he is saying logically is that Parliament has in effect delegated its decision-making power to another party and can never resume that power.

That of course would be an inappropriate delegation. Parliament cannot delegate its legislative or statutory powers. Those are powers that are held only by this body. They are not powers that can be delegated to any other group of individuals in the country. Therefore, the kind of delegation that he purports has happened here simply cannot be held to be a reasonable approach. Were it to be the case, we would have a situation in which Parliament would effectively become unable to govern the country, as powers could be delegated to other bodies by a previous Parliament, and this Parliament could never be able to legislate.

The arguments I have made are only further reinforced, I believe, by the logical outcome of my friend's position.

**The Speaker:** I thank hon. members for their further submissions. Once again I assure them that I will take these submissions under advisement and come back to the House with a ruling in due course.

**GOVERNMENT ORDERS**

[Translation]

**COPYRIGHT MODERNIZATION ACT**

The House resumed consideration of the motion that Bill C-11, An Act to amend the Copyright Act, be read the second time and referred to a committee, and of the amendment.

**Hon. Andrew Scheer (Speaker of the House of Commons, CPC):** The hon. member for Longueuil—Pierre-Boucher has 10 minutes to finish his speech.

**Mr. Pierre Nantel (Longueuil—Pierre-Boucher, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, unfortunately, it is clear that this bill is really like an 18-wheeler that arrives at the homes of songwriters and copyright owners only for them to find that it is empty. In reality, there is nothing to compensate for losses related to the private copying system.

We will remember how it happened and it is not just theoretical; it is very real. In the past, music was purchased in a different way. Today, we have music on our computers, our BlackBerrys and our iPods, and it should have been purchased. There is no problem at all if it was purchased through businesses such as iTunes, Amazon or Archambault.ca. However, we know very well that such is not always the case and that the recording industry is suffering great financial losses because material is available online, despite the fact that it may be coming from places where it is illegal to download material.

This shortcoming shows how completely out of touch this government—a government that claims to want to protect Canadians' jobs and recognize this value—really is. In reality, where will copyright owners' money come from if they cannot sell their material or if it is being stolen or literally plundered from the Internet? Clearly, this bill cannot be passed as is. We will have to work very hard to add something, particularly with regard to the private copying system.

I fully understand rights holders when they say that it does not make sense, that with the right to copy that the telecommunications and broadcasting media are being offered, that the steak, if you will, is being taken off the rights holders' plates, and that the potatoes and carrots may vanish as well. Let us look at the basics: when songwriters, CD companies, producers, and rights holders produce music, they expect to have it aired by broadcasters. To do this, the broadcaster makes an initial copy and inserts it into the broadcasting system. Everyone is glad the broadcaster is giving the song airtime, but nevertheless a mechanical reproduction right has until now been enshrined as part of the copyright. Now songwriters and rights holders are being told that the broadcasters will not be bound by this obligation. They will be permitted to make their working copy without fear of retribution. This is not the major issue affecting rights holders when it comes to Bill C-11, but it is just one more consideration. It adds insult to injury.



To my mind, the major problem remains the private copying system, which applies almost entirely to outdated platforms. The private copying system provides a form of royalty earned from each CD-R. But we all know that consumption of CD-Rs has fallen to infinitesimally low levels, because portable digital players such as iPods, MP3 players and other such devices have completely replaced the equipment and song transfer system used with CD-Rs.

The levy system is dying, and Bill C-11 is turning a blind eye. Nevertheless, this problem must be addressed. It is the biggest problem currently facing the rights-holder community. Not only is the initial mechanical reproduction right being taken away in broadcasting, copies may be made free of charge in educational and learning environments. One can understand how rights holders might be sympathetic to this situation, but royalties should still be paid all the same, although they could potentially be waived in writing. Rights holders may receive a request from a teacher and make exemptions in writing, or exempt someone from paying a fee in a particular context. Once again, the bill would stand in the way of this and seeks to abolish private copying, abolish the broadcasters' copy, and also remove the tiny amount of money that would otherwise have come from the education sector. What are artists and rights holders left with when it comes to copyright? This really must be addressed.

One possible solution could be to look at who benefits from this situation. As members know, when we look for music on the Internet, there is a place to buy music. But some people might also look for music elsewhere. That increases information trafficking on the Internet.

● (1520)

There are people selling high-speed connections with varying upload and download bandwidth limits. Could the government at least show an interest in exploring other avenues to compensate for this loss to the private copying regime? That is the essence of it. In the case of transfers over the Internet, that would be the least we could do for all of the subscribers we represent. The Internet has replaced traditional in-store CD sales. If we cannot apply the private copying system to devices like MP3 players or iPods, what is left for copyright owners? These people are left out in the cold with a new bill that should be providing some relief, since our copyright legislation is way behind—stuck in the times of Séraphin Poudrier—compared to the rest of the world. It is time for us to revamp copyright legislation. And with copyright collectives in particular, we have a long way to go.

In conclusion, I would like to make sure that we have a chance to look at other avenues to compensate for losing the private copying system.

**Mrs. Sadia Groguhé (Saint-Lambert, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the hon. member for his comments. He talked about compensation for piracy. What type of compensation was he thinking of and what form could it take?

**Mr. Pierre Nantel:** Mr. Speaker, that is a good question, and fitting, since I have talked both before and after question period. We are essentially talking about compensation methods because it is very difficult to track every little transaction made by a user at home who sits in front of a computer searching for a song, ideally on a legal site. Unfortunately, we all know that people are more likely to

search for music on illegal peer-to-peer sharing sites. It has been mentioned many times that most artists do not want to be in a position where they have to sue the people who like their music. It is also very difficult to track all this with any accuracy.

That is why the principle of compensation was proposed. At the time, the compensation was easy to apply. It was applied to blank recording media, to which a work could be copied. Today, copies are made on portable digital players. When people tried to extend the private copying compensation system from blank CDs to the portable digital player, they wore t-shirts that read, "No iPod Tax". They refused to add another tax. This compensation measure will have to be applied. The reality is that we have gone from copying on a CD-R to a portable player with virtual songs that, theoretically, do not exist anywhere, and to which we cannot apply royalties. Who would get the royalties when we are not always able to get an accurate record of these millions of transactions per year that can be made on the Internet?

● (1525)

[English]

**Ms. Jinny Jogindera Sims (Newton—North Delta, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, there is absolutely no doubt that, with all the advances we have seen in technology in my lifetime, there is a need for us to address the copyright rules we have.

I have come a long way from my beginnings as a student and then my teaching career. Now we are seeing the kind of technological change that absolutely amazes all of us. When I was home for the break last week, over Thanksgiving dinner my grandson, who is in grade seven, showed me a YouTube video of himself playing in a rock band that is making the rounds and getting loads of hits. There we can see the creativity of 11-year-olds as they get into using this new media in a way that we cannot.

However, we can also see, as we are beginning to see the new creative ways of using the new technologies, as well as the old ones, like good old printed books, that there is a need for us to look at copyright in a very balanced way, in a way that we protect the rights of the creators, as well as those who then purchase the content and become the sellers, so to speak, and control that. If we move toward an unbalanced approach where the content owners actually have more power than those who are the creative agents behind that content, I feel we will see a loss in creativity and, in the long run, a loss in revenues for us.

Just to review for those of us who are here and those listening, ACTRA, the Alliance of Canadian Cinema, Television and Radio Artists, estimates that the industry contributes \$85 billion per year to our economy. These industries and the jobs that depend on them can only thrive in an environment where intellectual property is protected. That is the dilemma for us as we look at the new technologies where somebody can create a piece, hit a button and, before we know it, it goes around the world.

### *Government Orders*

The ACTRA industry and all it supports is 1.1 million jobs. We are not talking about a few jobs here. We are talking about 1.1 million jobs and a lot of these jobs happen because we have creators who produce wonderful ideas and content that other people then pick up on and produce. So we need to ensure that those artists and their right to earn a living is protected.

Despite these significant contributions made by the artists to our economy, some would be surprised to know that the average earning of an artist in Canada is \$12,900 a year. When I read that figure and had that research presented to me, I was taken aback because, if that is what they are earning now, it is my belief that, with the changes that are being made to the Copyright Act, those earnings will diminish and many of these artists will be forced to look somewhere else and their creativity and all the wealth it introduces will be lost to us.

In 2008, the Conference Board of Canada reported that in 2007 the cultural sector generated \$25 billion in taxes for all levels of government. That is three times higher than the \$7.9 billion that were spent on culture by all levels of government. When we look at our level of returns there, it is absolutely stunning.

When we look at the federal government's investments in art and culture, we see that it invested \$3.7 billion in 2007-08 and yet typical households in that same timeframe spent \$1.4 billion on cultural outreach and participating in the performing arts.

• (1530)

That tells us that the bill the government has introduced must be paid due diligence. We need to examine that bill and make amendments to ensure we have balance not only for the creators who inspire the content owners eventually to make the kind of profits they do, and the content owners eventually, but also for consumers.

We can see that we have a lot of work to do. The bill is very similar to the one that was in the House previously. The NDP indicated then, and our position is the same today, that we do believe modernization is long overdue but that the bill has too many glaring problems. As a matter of fact, it seems to create problems where none exist right now. Therefore, we look forward to and will be making amendments that will examine some of these issues.

When we consider the legislation that is before us, we notice that it seems to be driven less by the needs of Canadians, the artists, the content owners and Canadian consumers, and it seems to be more an attempt at satisfying the demands of the large content owners in the U.S.

What we need to know is when Canadians will have copyright legislation that works for Canadians, whether they be the creators, the content owners or the consumers. We cannot, over and over again, pass legislation here that will actually damage our own industry to the benefit of those in the U.S. who would benefit from these kinds of changes.

The NDP is not the only one making these statements. Michael Geist, a renowned technology commentator, put it very succinctly when he wrote:

The foundational principle of the new bill remains that anytime a digital lock is used - whether on books, movies, music, or electronic devices - the lock trumps virtually all other rights.

When we actually listen to that and really understand what that means, all the rights the legislation would give in relaxation in some of the areas for educators, et cetera, and for satire, are then trumped as soon as this digital lock device is used. Therefore, in the long run, it would effectively take away the rights that the bill pretends to give in one part and then, through this lock, actually takes them all away.

There was also a comment made by the cultural industries. They say that the bill may be toxic to Canada's digital economy. During this very sensitive time, when the world economies seem to be teeter-tottering and we, in Canada, know we will suffer some of the echo effect of that, Canadians cannot afford to add toxicity to any one of our industries. That is a very strong signal being sent to us as the cultural group claims that the bill fails to ensure fair compensation for Canadian content.

That creates a great deal of concern for us, as Canadians. We value our Canadian culture, we value our Canadian artists and we celebrate when Canadians do well on the international stage. We have two Canadian book writers who are in London waiting to hear if they will get prestigious awards.

• (1535)

We celebrate when a Canadian makes it in the film industry. We celebrate when some of our theatre makes it out onto the world stage because we are proud to be Canadian. It is imperative for our children and our grandchildren that we safeguard and nurture Canadian content. Therefore, any message that we receive and any warning that we are creating an environment of toxicity for Canadian creativity should give every one of us in the House grave concern because, after all, we are members of Parliament for Canada and we value our Canadian heritage and our Canadian art, both domestically and internationally.

The Writers Guild of Canada also writes that it has a great deal of concern that the digital locks, at their best, will simply freeze current revenue streams for creators. What happens when we freeze revenue streams for creators? The creativity actually withers away because they then have to look for jobs that will put bread and butter on their tables. I urge the House to look at the bill and for the government to look at amendments that will not starve our artists away from their passion.

CIPPIC, also on the digital locks, says that wherever this has been tried it has proven to be a problem. It is urging the government to look for a fair balance between users, copyright owners and the needs of the creators.

Overall, there is not one group out there, except maybe some U.S. groups, that are saying that the system we have of the locks is good. I find that interesting in itself because usually when we put a lock on something we are closing the door. This actually does create a great deal of concern.

Geist also writes that this bill remains basically unchanged from a previous iteration of it and that it is the most inflexible, restrictive digital lock provision in the world. Why would we want to go down this road to kind of stranglehold the creativity among the artists across Canada?



It then leads one to beg the question as to why we are doing this. What is it that is driving us to do this? Once again, we know there has been a lot of pressure from the U.S. in a number of ways. We have Canadian organizations speaking against this but the government is sticking to this digital lock rule. Why? The answer, according to Geist, and I am beginning to agree with him, is that it seems to be that the digital lock rules are primarily about satisfying U.S. pressure, not Canadian public opinion. The U.S. pressure on Canada is not a secret, with the criticism of past bills and regular demands for action on copyright in return for progress on other board and trade issues. Surely we are not going to trade off our own creativity, our own heritage, in order to maybe have some talks on trade. Surely those talks should be had by two equal partners at a table looking for ways to improve trade and provisions.

When I look at some of the internal memos that have been brought to light, we see that Prime Minister Harper personally promised—

**Some hon. members:** Oh, oh!

**Ms. Jinny Jogendera Sims:** Sorry.

• (1540)

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bruce Stanton):** Order, please. I know the hon. member for Delta—Richmond East will want to refrain from using names. She has already apologized so we will carry on.

**Ms. Jinny Jogendera Sims:** I do apologize to my colleagues in the House, Mr. Speaker. Sometimes claiming newness does work, but I do apologize for that.

Our own Prime Minister personally promised U.S. President Bush in 2008 that Canada would pass copyright reforms. Former industry ministers raised the possibility of leaking an advance copy of the copyright bill to the U.S. Former industry ministers gave advice and encouraged the U.S. to pressure Canada by elevating us on its privacy watch list. Former heritage ministers caved to U.S. pressure by enacting an anti-camcorder bill despite departmental analysis that no changes to the law were needed. An official of the Privy Council Office leaked the contents of the mandate letters for the then prime minister's aide. Canada participated in a WTO complaint on copyright against China at the request of the U.S. despite the inability to amass credible evidence of harm against any Canadian interests.

After years of false starts, it is clear that the copyright bill will pass. The government has a majority. However, I appeal to the government and to the House to look at this and make it so that it appeals more to what Canadians need, what our Canadian creative talent needs, as well as our Canadian consumers.

As a teacher, I was pleased to see parts of the bill. I was pleased to see there was a bit of relaxation for educators. On the other hand, I wish there had been a bit more. I was then disturbed when I read that the material that students access will get destroyed within 30 days. When they finish a course they must shred whatever they have.

That made me think about what my history has been like. I know some members will be really wondering what planet I live on, but I do still have my high school notebooks and, believe it or not, I have actually used them when I was covering world history. We do not need to reinvent everything. In the same way, I still have many of the papers I wrote, including some of the research I did from my

university days. I do not have boxes of contents. It is all in one box neatly tucked away. However, those are the gems I have treasured over the years and, as a teacher, I have held on to those.

Here we are asking students to destroy things at the end of the course. However, a student who may want to retake the course in order to improve his or her marks, because GPAs drive everything these days, will have no documentation because it will have been destroyed. After 30 days apparently there will be a self-destruct motion, which I find absolutely fascinating.

We are a multicultural society and, as a multicultural society, we get bombarded with all kinds of media. I have an 84-year-old mother who is very fond of Bollywood productions. She purchases and watches those Bollywood productions. As I am looking this, I am thinking about the kind of restrictions this legislation would put on her as she tries to hang on to some kind of heritage and really enjoys watching a Bollywood movie when she cannot go for a walk. I hope there is nothing in the bill that would restrict my mother's ability to watch a movie more than once and then even play it when we visit her just so that she feels we are watching television some of the time, or at least what she watches. My mother is not the only person who could be impacted. Many communities will be impacted.

• (1545)

As I said earlier, there is an absolute need for us to modernize our copyright laws. They are outdated. They do not suit or address the serious concerns we have now or the advances we have made in technology.

In doing that, let us also ensure that we do not forget the rights of the creative talent that will seed a lot of those ventures that we are trying to copyright. As well, at a minimum, we need to address the lock and how that in itself affects not only revenue but could kill creative talent.

In a world that is so digital that once something is sent out by accident, one cannot recall it because it is all over the world, we have to be very careful as we move into this area of copyright.

I hope that members of government will take a serious look at the concerns raised and address some of those concerns through amendment.

**Mr. Dean Del Mastro (Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister and to the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I listened to hon. member speak and I believe her heart is in the right place, but some of the facts are missing in her argument.

*Government Orders*

When the bill was at committee in the previous Parliament, we heard from numerous groups that came forward: folks like Perrin Beatty from the Canadian Chamber of Commerce and John Manley from the Canadian Council of Chief Executives. We also heard from the entertainment software industry, of which Canada is one of the leaders globally in entertainment software, gaming software and so forth. We heard from the Canadian film industry and MusicCanada. Graham Henderson was here with Loreena McKennitt.

They did not get to give all of their testimony because we were cut short by a vote that was forced by the opposition members on that day. They would not extend the time to allow the witnesses at committee to speak their minds. However, they all spoke passionately in favour of the bill. One of the reasons is because the bill targets the wealth destroyers in this country.

Canada is a bit of a pariah. It may not be comfortable for some folks to hear that, but we have to pass the bill because we have wealth destroyers operating in this country like Pirate Bay and isoHunt. They want to take what is created by the artists in this country and give it away for free.

The bill would force that product back into the market. It would force people who want to consume a product to purchase it. Then the person who created it would get paid for it. What is so wrong with that?

**Ms. Jinny Jogindera Sims:** Mr. Speaker, none of us have too much of a problem in going after people who do illegal things and break the law. Absolutely, there should be punitive measures.

However, when we are looking at changing a copyright law to address the new world we live in with the new technologies, surely it behooves us to look at the impact of the bill, and not just on the software companies and the content owners who do make huge profits. Surely, at the same time, we have to look at protecting the rights of the creative talent without whom these software companies would not be able to make that kind of profit or be the wealth makers.

We are not saying that we should not make changes or modernize. We are saying that we should take a look at the impact of the lock system being proposed, and how it would limit and destroy creativity and force people out from working in this area.

I have to admit that I am delighted that my grandchildren love the piano and music. They see futures and a career, not at the selling end but at the creative end. I would hate to see us do anything to limit that. I see some problems with the bill.

**Mr. Ted Hsu (Kingston and the Islands, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, this debate reminds me of something that my brother told me. He is a musician and music teacher. He told me that the training and education of musicians today, because of modern technology and the Internet, is radically different from what it was when he and I were growing up. The reason is that musicians are listening to a vastly greater amount of music and a much more varied collection of music than we did when we were growing up and learning to become musicians.

My question to the hon. member is in regard to the exemption for education. Does she think that the definition of education needs to be

made more precise or elaborated on more in the bill than it is at present?

• (1550)

**Ms. Jinny Jogindera Sims:** Mr. Speaker, I always think that the definition of education needs to be broadened because I believe everything we do in our life, in one way or another, is an education.

I do agree that when we are looking at the kind of education that young musicians and artists are going through today, it is in a very different world. Because it is happening in this new environment, we need to relax the rules a little bit, so that they can benefit from other artists' work and learn from it.

At the same time, as we are doing that, when we look at this bill, it actually further restricts the education definition.

[Translation]

**Mr. Louis Plamondon (Bas-Richelieu—Nicolet—Bécancour, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, I listened closely to the hon. member's speech, and she touched on a number of important points. The Conservative member said that authors need to be protected through punitive measures. I am wondering if the hon. member shares my belief that it would be much better to pay a levy on the new technology we are using. I am not talking about a tax, but a levy that would be paid at the time of purchase. This money would go to the creators.

When a composer writes a song that is then stolen by thousands of people, he gets no revenue, so he has no way of suing the thieves, the people who are stealing his work. That is the problem. It is easy to say that artists can just sue someone who steals their work, but they do not have the means to do that.

The easiest way to avoid the problem of massive legal costs would be to just collect a levy when someone buys a device that can record 1,000 or 2,000 songs. That would bring an element of fairness, as was the case with blank cassettes when everyone was recording songs on them. There was a levy of 50¢ or 60¢. Or it may have been 28¢; I do not remember the exact amount. This money was given to the creators. We could do the same thing with new electronic devices.

[English]

**Ms. Jinny Jogindera Sims:** Mr. Speaker, I absolutely believe that we need to find a way to ensure that artists receive fair compensation. How that can be achieved is a much bigger discussion than we can have here today.

With the system that is currently proposed, we actually have a real danger that consumers will be able to purchase content that they will not be able to use later on. So even if consumers buy something, there is no guarantee that they can continue using it for the purpose it was purchased.

Also, because the digital lock actually supersedes other rights guaranteed in the charter, an area that I actually really wanted to talk about before I ran out of time, it will impact our citizens with disabilities and that lack of ability could change the format of digital materials.



*Government Orders*

**Mr. Claude Gravelle (Nickel Belt, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the member sitting behind me for her eloquent speech on this bill. Since the member is an educator, I would like her to comment on the fact that digital locks are going to exist on some of these discs and after five days they will be destroyed, and that course material used by long distance students will have to be destroyed after 30 days. I would like the member to comment on how she thinks long distance education is going to be affected by this bill?

• (1555)

**Ms. Jinny Jogindera Sims:** Mr. Speaker, I am always fascinated by the term “self-destruct”. It always reminds me of some science fiction movie I have watched over the years. However, it is a concern that within five days, the digital material will self-destruct, whatever that looks like.

My greater concern is the impact this would have on every day students, but more on distance education. Those who have been in the education field would know that distance education actually allows students to work at their own pace. When they are working at their own pace, we could imagine that some might finish an assignment in a couple of days while others might take longer. One student can finish a history 11 course in a semester, and another one can take three semesters.

In education we celebrate the fact that the students complete the course. This kind of limitation would put all kinds of barriers in the way, and once again, once the students have received this material, 30 days after the course they have to destroy everything.

Why would we be asking students who have learned material, who have gathered things together, to destroy it all after 30 days? Surely we want them to have ongoing learning. They may even read it in the bathroom a few years down the road, we never know.

[Translation]

**Mr. Alain Giguère (Marc-Aurèle-Fortin, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I would inform you that I will be splitting my speaking time with my colleague from Québec.

Today we are talking about Bill C-11. Never has a name suited a bill less. This is not a bill about copyright, it is a bill about the denial of copyright. Coming from a Conservative government whose trademark is hate, fear and despair, this is not surprising. It is not surprising that this same government, which has cut international representation of artists, is again attacking people who advocate something other than hate, fear and despair.

With this bill, the Conservatives are giving the digital industry complete ownership of Canadian culture. It has all the rights, all the resources, and the financial sacrifices made for it. Canadian artists are no longer anything but foils. They are no longer entitled to any financial compensation for their works.

This evolution is taking place internationally. There are two trends. The American trend is to simply try to install technological locks to prevent copying, and give the owners of search engines or Internet sites the right to penalize people who violate their rights or have them sentenced to lengthy prison terms. The artists are the ones forgotten in this debate, because there are also effects on private copying in Canada. They are also totally ignored and deprived of the economic right to earn a living from their works. This bill gives the

owner of the Internet content complete power by controlling a lock. It also gives them all the rights in copies and the right to deprive artists, what was called private copying.

At the time, this was not a problem. There were vinyl records and cassettes. They were produced and sold by the unit. Artists received royalties on their works with each sale. When the compact disc and the computer arrived on the scene, there was a financial problem. Records, films and any artistic content could be copied. The response from the Canadian industry at the time was to add a levy for private copying to the price of a compact disc. That generated very substantial sums for Canadian artists—over \$60 million. But the technology has continued to evolve. We have seen the emergence of new digital devices like the iPod and the BlackBerry, which allow a work to be reproduced ad infinitum without necessarily having a physical medium like a CD.

For the first few years, we got around the problem by expanding private copying rights from CDs to all digital equipment. This allowed artists to continue receiving the same amount of money. Unfortunately, the legislation was not adapted in that respect, which meant that all of these private copying rights became obsolete. The owners of these rights were deprived of their revenues. For the industry, this meant the end. The music recording industry disappeared. Manufacturers do not produce records anymore. Artists now produce their recordings themselves. The large corporations provide only marketing and commercial support.

Sales have dropped considerably. Not only did these people lose all financial support, but they were told to simply accept it. Educational institutions were even told they had to give up their rights. It was left to artists themselves to pay for the rights of educational institutions to have artistic material.

• (1600)

The creation of these infamous digital locks, intended to prevent piracy, led to two major problems. The first has to do with consumers' rights. There is no guarantee that consumers will really get the artistic performance for which they have paid, to be able to put it on their computer, through the Internet. This basically depends on the capacity of the search engine, the website they are using, the links. It depends entirely on all of that.

The second problem has to do with artists' rights, copyright, which is completely absent from this bill. It has completely disappeared. It is no longer there. That is why Bill C-11 is not the Copyright Modernization Act, but rather an act to deny copyright. It cannot be called copyright if the individual who has produced or invented something derives no financial benefit. That person's work is being stolen and the government is letting it happen.

*Government Orders*

It is quite clear whose side this government has come down on when it comes to the new digital economy and the Canadian artistic community. Once again, the government has decided not to be Canadian. It has decided to favour foreigners at the expense of our economic rights and our cultural rights—because Canadian culture is also at stake. The Canadian economy is financially well off. Prosperous, according to reports. Unfortunately, it has been determined that this prosperity will not trickle down to the artistic community, that this community will be deprived, and that only foreigners will benefit from it. Canada is being stripped of a key part of its makeup: its culture. Culture has never been a strong suit of the Conservatives, nor of this particular government.

Need I remind you that this very same government slashed budgets for culture and is cutting the CBC budget, and that it continues to cut and cut deep. It even presided over the demise of grants for international representation. The government hates everything to do with culture. It is an area over which you have no control, and that which you do not control, you usually do away with. That much does not change. Once again, you are attempting to do away with something that you do not like, that you do not control, that is not there to serve you, that does not fit in with your philosophy on wealth creation. It is as if creating something, creating a cultural asset, is not in and of itself important. You do not give it an economic value. You do not assign it a monetary value.

The problem is that, as a consequence, the Conservative government is robbing Canada of its soul. It has deliberately decided to do away with everything that artists need. What do you expect them to do? How do you expect them to live with no income? These people should still have a right to earn income for what they have created, but you have decided to steal from them legally. Because that is what it is, theft.

● (1605)

[English]

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bruce Stanton):** I remind hon. members to direct their comments to the Chair.

Questions and comments, the hon. Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister.

**Mr. Dean Del Mastro (Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister and to the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, it would be so helpful if before members rose to speak to a bill they would actually do some work to understand the issue at hand. The member went off on a complete tangent talking about how this is an attack on artists. What complete nonsense. Does the member know what is an attack on artists? The fact that wealth destroyers like isoHunt and Pirate Bay allow people to copy works by artists as much as they want onto their hard drives and never pay a dime for it. That is an attack on artists.

What is the member's solution for it? This is what he is not saying because he is speaking in code. He is saying that we should put in place an iPod tax. Why does he not just come out and say that an iPod tax is what he wants, instead of talking in tangential comments that do not even make sense? Nobody at home even understood what he said.

This is not an attack on artists. This is a support for artists. It is a support for industry. That is what the Chamber of Commerce said.

That is what Music Canada said. That is what the Canadian television and film industry said. They said that this will create jobs and investment. That is what the member stands against.

[Translation]

**Mr. Alain Giguère:** Mr. Speaker, the right to private copying is not a tax; it is a levy. Our Conservative friends make this type of mistake, and they also make the mistake of confusing taxes with savings. This is similar to the debate on pension funds, which they consider to be a tax. They confuse savings and taxes. Now again, they are confusing the money levied through private copying with taxes.

Here is the problem. The hon. member can present this however he would like but, basically, it is a well known fact that some people will have money and some will not. It is the artists who will not.

[English]

**Mr. Ted Hsu (Kingston and the Islands, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the bill eliminates a multi-million dollar revenue stream for artists by eliminating ephemeral rights. There is no plan for a revenue stream to help artists adjust to that.

I was wondering how the member might propose amending this legislation to take care of that issue.

[Translation]

**Mr. Alain Giguère:** Mr. Speaker, with regard to private copying, if I am not mistaken—the hon. member can correct me if I am wrong—for two years, we had the right to put a levy on digital equipment, and people made money. We are talking about approximately \$60 million. This allowed artists to keep their heads above water. However, this amount keeps falling, keeps dropping. That is why the legislation must be amended to include a private copying levy on all digital electronics. A levy. It is quite normal for equipment used to distribute an artistic work to include a levy, a copyright payment for the artist providing the content. An empty iPod is worthless. It is the content that makes an iPod valuable.

**Mr. Romeo Saganash (Abitibi—Baie-James—Nunavik—Eeyou, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the hon. member for his wonderful speech, which was so heartfelt and passionate. We, on this side of the House, have always been open and we remain so today. That is how the NDP works, by reaching out.

I was wondering if the hon. member could give us one example of a change he sees as necessary for this bill.

● (1610)

**Mr. Alain Giguère:** Mr. Speaker, with all due respect for the hon. member, I would say that the first thing that should be done with this bill is to put it in the garbage. This bill is terrible, right down to its spirit and essence. It does not respect artists; it respects owners of communications sites. That is the main issue. This bill is fundamentally biased. There is not a single clause in this bill that is good. The very spirit of its content is flawed. This bill should be rewritten. I said at the beginning that this bill is about denying copyright. The reverse is not true.



*Government Orders*

**Ms. Annick Papillon (Québec, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure to speak today to Bill C-11, An Act to amend the Copyright Act, because this is an important bill whose purpose is to make changes that have been needed for a long time. Certainly this is a somewhat complex issue, since the last version of this act dates from 1997, and the technology has changed a lot since then.

Copyright is a sensitive thing, especially in the electronic age when file sharing and a plethora of content are available on the Internet. Consumers should not be able to download from illicit sources on line without having to pay. Reform of the Copyright Act was needed in order to provide greater protection for our creators. It is also essential to update the Canadian legislation, which is several years behind what is provided in international agreements.

While the government's intention to focus the battle against piracy on the big offenders is laudable, unfortunately, as my colleague said, Bill C-11 does not take into account the needs of the creators. With this bill, the Conservatives have intentionally avoided addressing the question of a possible expansion of the private copying exception, a measure that has been proposed by the NDP and a number of experts.

In Bill C-11 the Conservative government has brought us back exactly the same content as Bill C-32, which had already been severely criticized by the arts community. Bill C-11, unfortunately, does not achieve the balance that is needed between the rights of creators and the rights of the public. In spite of the fact that a number of artists, experts and spokespeople have addressed the parliamentary committee on this in recent months, the government is once again proposing a bill on which there is no unanimity.

And so the Conservatives have ignored the opinion of the experts heard in committee and the conclusions from their own copyright consultations in 2009. The result is that they have brought in a bill that could do more harm than good, and that is why we need to understand it clearly. We can therefore say that although a number of worthwhile proposals have been made and although there is a will on the part of politicians to work together to achieve a fair bill, the government has continued to turn a deaf ear to those proposals.

The National Assembly of Quebec has unanimously denounced this legislation, which does not ensure that Quebec creators receive full recognition of their rights and an income that reflects the value of their creations. In addition, on November 30 of last year, 100 Quebec artists, including Luc Plamondon, Robert Charlebois, Michel Rivard and Richard Séguin, travelled to Ottawa to tell the Minister of Heritage and Official Languages, the Minister of Industry and the entire Conservative caucus that they did not want the copyright bill in the form the government is stubbornly presenting.

Bill C-11 favours the big players in the creative world. Unfortunately, the small artists and artisans are not as lucky. What Bill C-11 does is to attack artisans' copyright directly, and in so doing it contributes to destabilizing the low incomes of Canadian artists. An example of the revenue that minor creators will soon have to forego is the tens of millions of dollars now paid to authors annually by the education system. From now on, the education system will be able to use our authors' works without having to pay compensation. Certainly the NDP supports the use of these works for

educational purposes, but it believes that this should not be done at the expense of the creators.

Nor does Bill C-11 provide for any compensation for downloading to an iPod. A solution suggested by many, to impose a \$2 to \$5 levy on iPods and other portable digital players has been dismissed by the government, once again at the expense of creators. Nor does this bill contain any provision in relation to Internet service providers obligating them to pay fees for music downloaded through their networks. The government is simply calling on providers to be partners in the fight against piracy by forcing them to take receipt of copyright violation notices issued by creators and the organizations that manage their rights.

• (1615)

Another controversial point in this bill has to do with digital locks. Under this provision, it will be illegal, for example, for a consumer to break the digital lock installed on a DVD that the consumer has purchased, just to copy it onto a personal computer. That could become particularly problematic when locks are installed on educational material.

Artists do not benefit because they are deprived of millions of dollars in levies, and students do not benefit because they will have trouble accessing the educational materials they need. Certain copyright owners, the big companies, will benefit.

The Copyright Modernization Act gives with one hand and takes away with the other. Even though the bill contains certain concessions for consumers, these are undermined by the government's refusal to compromise when it comes to the most controversial copyright issue in this country, the digital lock.

When it comes to distance education, for example, the provisions in the new bill mean that people living in a remote community will have to burn their class notes 30 days after downloading them. That is not an improvement on the current situation and it is not an appropriate use of the copyright regulations.

In summary, it appears that all efforts to reform the Copyright Act in Canada in recent years have had very little impact on the creation of a balanced system between the rights of creators and those of the public. One only need look at the demands made by the big content owners in the U.S. to see whom this bill will really benefit. It is a valid question: have the Conservatives forsaken Canadians at the expense of copyright interests in the United States?

Recent documents published by WikiLeaks clearly show that the Conservatives have acted against Canada's interests. The documents paint a dismal picture of the Conservatives who have conspired with the Americans in order to force the adoption of copyright legislation similar to that in the United States.

New documents reveal that the government encouraged the United States to put Canada on their piracy watch list in order to pressure Parliament to pass new legislation that would weaken the rights of Canadian consumers.

*Business of the House*

In the words of the NDP critic for copyright and digital issues, Charlie Angus, “The U.S. Piracy List is supposed to be reserved for—”

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bruce Stanton):** Order, please. I would like to remind the hon. member that it is not appropriate to mention a member's name. She should instead refer to his riding. That is preferable.

The hon. member for Québec has the floor.

**Ms. Annick Papillon:** Mr. Speaker, I am sorry. I was speaking about the hon. member for Timmins—James Bay, who said:

The U.S. Piracy List is supposed to be reserved for countries on the margin of international law. Instead it is being used as a bully tool to undermine Canada's international trade reputation.

If the Conservatives are prepared to use their majority to impose this legislation without amendments, Canadians will be deeply disappointed by a government that would ram through a bill that lacks balance and takes away some rights from Canadian authors and creators.

The NDP believes that it is high time to update the Copyright Act but that Bill C-11 has too many obvious problems. We will therefore work on amending the bill so that it better reflects the interests of Canadians. For that reason we are proposing, among other things, to delete from the copyright modernization bill the clauses that criminalize the removal of digital locks for personal, non-commercial purposes. Furthermore, we support shorter sentences for those found guilty of violating the Copyright Act because this would prevent the excessive recourse to litigation against individuals, a situation that is problematic in the United States.

• (1620)

[English]

**Mr. Dean Del Mastro (Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister and to the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, Bill C-11 is written entirely technological neutral and that is important.

The member discussed a few items. I believe she touched a little on the issue of royalties and so forth. We refer to that as an iPod tax, the copying levy that her party endorses.

Part of the problem with the position of the members opposite on this and the reason why digital locks are so important is because storage of music, movies and so forth will not actually be on devices like this anymore. People will not buy them on cassettes, DVDs or CDs. I am sure members have heard of the iCloud that Apple has just launched. I am sure we have seen things like Rogers On Demand, Cogeco On Demand and Shaw On Demand. People just push the button and they have an inventory of movies.

Digital locks are absolutely imperative to be put in place so that material cannot be stolen, so that the rights holder, which is not Rogers or Shaw in most cases, is actually protected and paid for the use of that material.

That is why it is important. It is a business solution.

[Translation]

**Ms. Annick Papillon:** Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague opposite for the question.

I would like to ask him the following: if it is neutral, as he claims, why do more than 80 arts and culture organizations in Quebec and the rest of the country say that the bill is toxic? They say it is “toxic to Canada's digital economy.” And how can he ignore all the economic benefits of the arts and culture?

In addition, as the member for Québec, I can attest to the extent to which all levels of government usually agree. I deplore the fact that the federal government does not currently recognize that investing in culture is a good way to contribute to the economy, which is important right now.

**Mr. Ted Hsu (Kingston and the Islands, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, to learn to write, one has to read the works of the great writers. To learn to play music, one must listen to the performances of the great musicians.

[English]

The next generation of artists is in a really special position with technology that is available. It allows artists to immerse themselves in what has come before them and what people in other parts of the world do.

It concerns me a bit that education has not been clearly defined in the exemptions in the legislation. Would my hon. colleague agree with that and does there need to be a more careful definition of education in the legislation?

[Translation]

**Ms. Annick Papillon:** Mr. Speaker, I agree and I thank my colleague for his question and his heartfelt introduction.

Indeed, a number of things do not add up in this bill. The notion of education is very poorly defined. That is why, like my colleagues, I think we must absolutely amend this bill and make some major changes, if not completely take an axe to it. The artistic community has spoken out against this bill.

**Mrs. Sadia Groguhé (Saint-Lambert, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I congratulate my colleague on her speech and would like to quickly ask her what consequences digital locks would have on the industry.

• (1625)

**Ms. Annick Papillon:** Mr. Speaker, I think that digital locks would have some very serious consequences. They are the key point of the bill. I think there are many other elements like that in Bill C-11 that could cause problems.

\* \* \*

[English]

**BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE**

**Hon. Gordon O'Connor (Minister of State and Chief Government Whip, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, there have been consultations on the following motion. I move:



That, notwithstanding any Standing Order or usual practices of the House, when the House begins proceedings under the provision of Standing Order 53.1 today, no quorum calls, requests for unanimous consent or dilatory motion shall be received by the Speaker and; any member rising to speak during debate may indicate to the Speaker that he or she will be dividing his or her time with another member.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bruce Stanton):** Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

(Motion agreed to)

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### COPYRIGHT MODERNIZATION ACT

The House resumed consideration of the motion that Bill C-11, An Act to amend the Copyright Act, be read the second time and referred to a committee, and of the amendment.

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I welcome the opportunity to speak on Bill C-11, a bill that I understand has a bit of a history in the chamber. I can appreciate that at times the government is frustrated because it does not necessarily get what it wants.

In previous minority governments, the Conservatives attempted to pass legislation of a similar nature, almost a word-for-word bill, but because of the frustrations of not being successful in getting it passed, we once again have Bill C-11 before us, the same bill with a different number.

I would suggest that many of the concerns that were expressed over the last number of months and beyond still exist today and I would encourage the government to open its mind as to what types of amendments would make the bill a healthier one. At the end of the day, even though Liberals have moved an amendment to deal with the bill, we recognize that there is value to ensuring that we have copyright laws that are fair and balanced.

We recognize the importance of the individuals who create our music and other aspects of our culture and we want to encourage the industry. As has been pointed out by many, our cultural community provides a huge economic benefit for all Canadians. We need to do what we can as legislators to protect and encourage that industry and to ensure that it is going to be able to not only continue but grow and prosper. When that industry grows and prospers, we will see more jobs being created and the overall lifestyle in Canada being improved on many different fronts.

We recognize the value of artists and others and recognize how important it is for us to be there in a very real and tangible way, but we also value the importance of the consumer. We want to ensure that consumers' rights are in fact protected. This provides me the opportunity to share with the House some of the concerns I have with regard to that particular issue.

My biggest concern is the whole concept of the digital lock provisions in the legislation. I must admit that I am somewhat dated, in the sense that I can still recall the good old eight-tracks and record players. People went to Kmart or Zellers and bought blank cassettes. They had music at home on the record player and they recorded the music that they, or maybe even their parents, had purchased from the store. They recorded it on cassette so they could continue to enjoy

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that music on a trip in the car, believing that they had acquired the song they wanted to listen to.

I recall hanging around with my buddies and talking about the fact that we had to buy records for  $x$  number of dollars just to get one or two songs that we liked. We ended up buying five or six records and put all our favourite songs on one cassette, and there was never any feeling that we were pirating anything or that it was an illegal act.

The vast majority of consumers want to do the right thing. Consumers are responsible individuals and contributors to our communities, and they recognize how important it is that we protect our artists.

• (1630)

Quite often when we think of artists, we think of big name artists, and there is a bit of resentment toward them. Some would look at the late Michael Jackson and ask themselves just much money this guy really needs and the type of royalties that one would pay. There might not be as much sympathy for big name artists, but we still have to protect artists through copyright laws.

A vast majority of the artists are not multi-millionaires. They are hard-working Canadians who have sacrificed their time, energy, thoughts and ideas. Maybe they rented a recording studio and put together a CD. Now they are hoping to make enough money from that CD to recover their costs, and if they can make a little extra, they are very grateful.

In Winnipeg we have a wonderful annual event known as Folklorama. I suspect a number of my colleagues in the House will be familiar with it, and I would recommend that all members visit Winnipeg during a Folklorama and become familiar with it. They would witness a litany of those types of artists who are so committed to making events like Folklorama work and who are so committed to what they do that they sacrifice a great portion of their energy and their time in order to produce that contribution to our culture.

One individual at the Indian and Métis Friendship Centre on Robinson Street in Winnipeg North—I believe his name was Lavallee—played the violin and performed a jig, which is a wonderful fancy dance I hope to be able to perform someday myself. This artist lives in a modest apartment in Tyndall Park. I did not ask him how much he was making or what the proceeds were on his CD, but he sure was proud of it. He felt it was right on, and good quality. At the end of the day, after the audience had been able to listen and hear this man playing live on stage and after the concert was over, he stood by the door selling his CDs.

I enjoyed the performance. I was pleased to meet him, shook his hand, and said I would love to buy the CD. I did not purchase the CD because I wanted to go home and listen to the music right away, but because I wanted to support a young artist and saw the benefits of doing that.

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I would argue that there are tens of thousands of Canadians who would do likewise, because we get an appreciation of the artists' efforts. In many ways we are talking about our sons or daughters who are in this line of work or engaged in this creativity, and I suspect we would find a great deal of support, but when I look at the legislation, I see that the government seems to be determined that it has it right and it does not really matter what the opposition has to say: it will go to committee, where it has a majority, and pass it the way it is.

● (1635)

I do not make that assertion lightly. I was listening to some of the speeches earlier, and we hear that there were literally hundreds of people, if not thousands, who provided feedback to the government with regard to the legislation. They provided ideas that could have made it a better piece of legislation, yet the government, for whatever reason I am not sure, has made a determination that what it has is as good as it is going to get and that they are really not open to any changes or amendments.

That is why I believe the responsible thing for the Liberal Party to do was to bring forward this recent amendment. We want to see balance when it comes to copyright rules and laws. It is important that it be balanced, and the government has not recognized or acknowledged that.

I will give an example. If my daughter were here, she would be able to tell us anything we wanted to know about iPods. It is amazing what young people can do with one hand with these little items. From pictures to music and videos, the technology is incredible. Should not my daughter or millions of other Canadians who purchase an item in digital format, such as a song, have the right to use that purchase in different ways, as long as it is for personal reasons?

I am not going to suggest that my daughter or anyone else should be able to buy a song and download it onto the computer and send it out to two million Canadians. That would not be appropriate.

What would be appropriate? She has a cell telephone. She has an iPod. She has one of these iMac computers. Should she be obligated to buy one copy for each? I'm not entirely convinced that should be the case.

I would look to members to tell me if I was wrong when, in those younger teenaged years, I acquired records that I enjoyed and would pick and choose songs from each record and record them onto a blank cassette so that I could listen to the cassette with all of my favourite songs on it. Was that wrong? I do not believe it was.

When we require such things as digital locks, there are impacts. I have DVDs. We all have DVD movies. I have some VHS movies that have digital locks. There are some movies that I really enjoy, and quite often I will put on such a movie in the background while I work on my laptop doing constituency work or whatever else it might be. The movie is playing in the background, but DVDs get scratched up and VHS tapes get worn. Should I not be able to back up the material that I purchased? Do I not have the right to do that?

These are very real question marks. They are there today with regard to the proposed legislation.

● (1640)

We have to ask if this is the type of legislation we should be moving forward. We have to keep in mind that because there is a majority government, no matter what we hear in committee, all indications are that the government is determined to pass the bill the way it is. The government is not really open to amendments.

If we are trying to address genuine, bona fide concerns in the second reading debate, one can understand why the Liberal Party is suggesting that we pass the reasoned amendment. If government members were to stand and say they are prepared to listen and act on some of the concerns being expressed by opposition members, there might be the will to pull the reasoned amendment. There would have to be a clear indication from government members that they would accept some amendments or amend the bill themselves. I have participated in majority governments in Manitoba. Many amendments that originated from the opposition were passed. If an amendment would make the legislation better, why would the government not at least approach it with an open mind?

One of the more appropriate ways to do that would be for a government minister to approach the critics. There should be briefings for the critics to explain what it is the government hopes to do with the legislation. The critics could take that information to members in their caucus. The issues could be debated to see if there could be some changes. We should invite stakeholders outside Parliament to voice their concerns and if, through that consultation process and through the work of the critics and ministerial staff, there are some amendments that would make a better piece of legislation, we should be prepared to accept them.

I have heard other concerns. I do not know how extreme it is, but will students be obligated to get rid of their homework after a certain amount of time? To be honest, I have not had the chance to read every detail in the bill, but a lot of red flags go up the pole when I hear a member of the opposition say that after a certain number of days a student might have to shred the notes that were taken in class. That is worthy of more discussion.

Let us see what sort of amendments might come up. I look forward to the bill going to committee. I look forward to seeing how the government will respond to amendments put forward by the New Democratic Party or the Liberal Party.

One of the benefits of allowing for debate on the bill is that individuals such as myself can get up and express their concerns. Some members are very specific in their concerns. The government has the responsibility to digest what is being said. The government itself can bring in amendments at committee stage. Imagine the goodwill that would be shown if the government were to identify some of those concerns.

I suspect that if we were to check with most Canadians, a number of the concerns that have been raised this afternoon on this bill are quite legitimate. They are definitely worth looking into to see if things can be done to make the bill better. If the government is not prepared to do that, the best thing we could do is go back to the drawing board. Let us look at the reasoned amendment that has been proposed by my colleague.



• (1645)

**Mr. Dean Del Mastro (Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister and to the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the hon. member was elected toward the end of the last Parliament and as such he may not have followed what went on at the committee. We were hearing from witnesses but unfortunately the time was restricted by the opposition parties. We wanted to meet as much as possible, get through the witness list as quickly as possible and get to the consideration of potential amendments, when opposition parties could have brought forward any amendments they had. We had some great suggestions from a number of the witnesses who brought forward some very specific technical amendments which I think should get some consideration at the committee. I hope to participate in the committee that undertakes the review of this bill, following the committee's consideration, when we get to final consideration of the bill.

There is something I want to ask the member very specifically on the bill. I think he understands the need to pass this bill. I think the Liberal Party largely understands the importance of passing this legislation. John Manley came before our committee. He is a former Liberal industry minister who actually worked on amendments to the bill. I have some sage advice for all members: there is no such thing as a perfect copyright bill; there are too many competing interests. John Manley said not to throw out the good in pursuit of the perfect.

Does the member agree with that?

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux:** Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the member's comment. I assure the member that I could find Conservatives who believe in the Canadian Wheat Board. He points to an example and says that John Manley said that for the most part the legislation is good and we should pass the bill. At the end of the day, if we can make the bill better, why would we not make it better? The member agrees with me on that point.

The bill will go into committee. Unfortunately, I will not be on that committee. I will be around after the bill exits committee and it will be interesting to see to what degree the opposition parties were responsible in bringing forward amendments and to what degree the government was responsible in terms of approaching those amendments with an open mind or bringing forward amendments too.

I have never been a big fan of any form of closure, but I am an optimist and we will just have to wait and see what happens.

**Ms. Peggy Nash (Parkdale—High Park, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, copyright is an incredibly complicated topic. It is very difficult to craft the right balance between consumer access and protecting the rights of creators. However, there is a very real concern that digital locks as would be allowed through this bill would not allow consumers full access to content they have paid for. At the same time, artists who generate more than \$1 billion of revenue to our economy and the average artists who make less than \$13,000 a year would not be fully compensated for their creative work on which this content relies. This bill could wipe away millions of dollars in revenue that artists ought to be entitled to.

In spite of the fact that the Liberal Party supported digital locks in a previous version of this bill, is the member now saying that his

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party supports amending the bill and that the Liberals will not be supporting it unless these amendments are incorporated?

• (1650)

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux:** Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the concern that has been raised by the member. I spent a great deal of my time talking about how important it is that we support the industry. Ultimately we could talk about the consumer, but the biggest stakeholders are the local artists. I made reference to one who happened to live in my constituency.

I can assure the member that the Liberal Party supports the industry. We believe it is important that there be balance. That is something which we will fight for here on the floor of the House and in committee. We believe there is a need to improve this legislation. As it currently stands, it is not good enough.

**Mr. Marc Garneau (Westmount—Ville-Marie, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I had the privilege of being on the legislative committee that looked at Bill C-32, the predecessor to Bill C-11. I met with the 132 witnesses and saw the hundreds of written submissions.

I would say that Bill C-11 has a lot of very good and very important things in it. I also feel there were some very good things that were presented by the witnesses representing all sides: the stakeholders, the industry, the artists, as well as the consumers.

What bothered me was that when Bill C-11 was brought forward very recently, it had absolutely no changes in it whatsoever. The Minister of Canadian Heritage said this morning that was done out of respect for the people who had spoken previously. I do not really understand what that means.

Does the member for Winnipeg North share my concern that perhaps we are going through a charade in terms of an exercise here? Nothing was changed between Bill C-32 and Bill C-11, so in the end we are going to end up going through a voting process that will make Bill C-11 the law with absolutely no changes, never mind how many witnesses came and spoke or how many written submissions were presented.

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux:** Mr. Speaker, that is a valid concern. That was a good part of the presentation that I was hoping to make.

All members in the House will talk about the importance of copyright laws. Within the Liberal Party we will talk about the importance of the industry. I suspect most parties might have a different slant on it, but at the end of the day members want to see balance. The best way to achieve that balance, we believe, is to have listened to some of those 132 presenters and the hundreds of individuals who provided advice on the issue. The government has not necessarily shown that it has done that.

Again, we will wait and see once the bill reaches committee stage. That will be a wonderful opportunity for members of the government to demonstrate to what degree they are listening, whether it was to those who presented before or hopefully to those who were not able to present but might get the chance to present when this bill goes to committee.

*Government Orders*

Hopefully the government not only will listen but will act on amendments. I look forward to the bill's ultimate return from committee. If the reasoned amendment does not pass, I do not want to predict what is going to take place in this chamber.

• (1655)

**Mr. Dean Del Mastro:** Mr. Speaker, I want to address the issue of whether or not the government is listening. I want to speak about the genesis of this bill, the former Bill C-32.

The government undertook a process where we consulted broadly in major cities right across the country. We had a consultation in Peterborough, where folks came in from Toronto and other places throughout Ontario, but also in Toronto and major centres right across the country. We also received some 8,000 written submissions on the bill and considered them all.

I would hazard to say there is not a single group that has either appeared before the previous committee or in fact had interest in appearing that we did not consider its request and see some of what it was seeking to have addressed in the bill addressed.

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux:** Mr. Speaker, as much as I want to give the member the benefit of the doubt, we have to recognize that between the two bills not one change was made, not even a comma.

We will have to wait and see what happens.

**Mr. Randall Garrison (Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I will be sharing my time with the member for Shefford.

I stand to speak to Bill C-11, the copyright modernization act, an act that would bring long overdue changes in Canadian copyright law and help us catch up with technological changes and with changes in international standards.

On the face, this is not a riveting topic for most of the public, but, when we go below the surface, it gets even more complex and we find law that even copyright lawyers have trouble understanding. This is an act of great importance to my constituents and to consumers who worry that once they have paid for content they will be unable to do things that they regularly do now, such as back it up, time shift it, shift the content from iPhones to MP3 players or to laptops. They are worried that these things, which have become routine in their daily lives, will be subject to penalties under the law.

It is also important for the creative industries in my riding which play an enormous role in the economy of greater Victoria, both as a part of our culture and being able to know who we are as a community, but also as a part of our vibrant tourist industry and as a job creator.

A study done by the Capital Regional District in 2010 showed that the economic activity of the arts and cultural sector in greater Victoria was worth more than \$170 million in net income and that it employed more than 5,400 people. This includes well-established groups like the Victoria Symphony, now in its 29th season and a relatively new kid on the block, and the Sooke Philharmonic Orchestra, which was founded in 1997 in the rural part of my riding.

It includes companies like Ballet Victoria, which has been operating very successfully since 2002, and the Canadian Pacific Ballet, which was founded in 2008. It includes probably the longest running community theatre, certainly in British Columbia I think, the

Langham Court Theatre, which has been operating since 1929, and the Belfry Theatre, which has been putting on plays since 1980, including premiering more than 158 Canadian productions. It also includes the small theatre company called Intrepid Theatre, which is the group that puts on what is called the Uno Fest for single performer productions and the Fringe Festival since 1986.

It also includes established visual artists, like Robert Bateman, who has just donated \$11 million of his work to the Royal Roads University in my riding, and other well-known artists, like my own personal favourite and friend, Phyllis Serota.

In music, it includes national artists, like Nelly Furtado, who come from Victoria, and again, a personal favourite of mine, Children of Celebrities, who some have described as old guys playing enviro-cowboy lounge music. It also includes a lot of new young bands: the Racoons, the Rocky Mountain Rebel Music, Pocket Kings, the Mindil Beach Markets and We Are The City.

Why am I listing all those groups? Those are all groups that are very much concerned about the reform to the Copyright Act and who believe that this needs to take place soon. What they are looking for is a balanced act that will balance the rights of creators, like themselves, to have an income stream from their product, with the rights of consumers who want to be able to purchase that material.

It is also a concern for the very large number of students and faculty members in my riding and in greater Victoria where we have more than 36,000 post-secondary students attending the University of Victoria, Camosun College and Royal Roads University.

In addition, we have new industries in the software area. One particularly famous one is producing online gaming software. Others are working in video games and other software in the computer industry. They are all very much concerned about the same thing, that they will have a constant and secure revenue stream from their creative work, but also that consumers get a fair deal so they will want to purchase their materials.

There is no doubt that we have a need for this new copyright legislation, one that protects intellectual property and one that does so in a way that ensures an income stream for those producers. We also need to ensure that we do not disrupt existing income streams for those working in the creative industries. One of the fears that we have about this bill in its current form is that it may inadvertently threaten the incomes of artists and other creative industry workers. This is critical in a country where the average artist in 2009-10, as my colleague mentioned earlier, earned just under \$13,000 a year.



• (1700)

We need to ensure that the revenues generated by new platforms actually flow to the creators of that material and not just to the big media companies, the big movie producers or the big record companies. Those who actually do the creative work need an income stream to continue to do so. We need a balance that ensures the right of creators to be compensated fairly for their work and the right of consumers to have access to the copyrighted material.

I do want the reform to go forward but not as the bill is currently drafted. Like other New Democrats, I will support moving this forward to committee to try to get the needed attention to the flaws in the bill.

A major concern we have on this side is with the digital lock provisions in the bill. As many have mentioned, if the bill goes forward in its present form, Canada will have the most stringent set of digital lock provisions in the entire world. These provisions would include punitive fines of up to \$1 million and 5 years in jail for removing digital locks. If we are going to have penalties like this, I would like to see amendments to ensure they actually apply to the pirates who the members on the other side like to point to and not to the ordinary consumer or, particularly, those with disabilities who quite often must have material shifted from one platform to another in order to make use of it.

In amending the bill, we need to ensure that those penalties fall on those who are trying to steal the copyrighted material and not on those who are simply trying to use it in ways that we have all become accustomed in the new digital world.

We also need to ensure that we preserve the concept of fair dealing for journalist. I think that will take extensive amendments to the bill. As I mentioned, for those with disabilities, we need to ensure exemptions are provided for them, particularly for those with visual handicaps who will need an exception from some of the digital lock provisions in the bill.

We also need to ensure that we preserve exemptions for education. I spent 20 years teaching in a post-secondary institution. I am concerned when I see a provision that says that copies produced for educational use will have to self-destroy in five days. I spent 20 years trying to convince my students to start their projects earlier than five days before they were due. Five days is a timeframe that simply does not fit with the kind of work students need to do in their academic careers. We need to ensure, particularly for those who make use of distance education, that they can maintain and use those materials longer than 30 days. This is particularly important in more remote and rural areas where distance education is sometimes the only alternative people have.

Although I am from Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca and I talk about greater Victoria, a lot of people at the end of my riding are two and a half hours from downtown. There are people who lack public transit to get into town or get to educational facilities, particularly those who live on reserves in the rural part of my riding. They need the distance education. They need the alternative delivery methods. We need to ensure there are exemptions in the act to protect their access to education.

### *Government Orders*

The New Democrats do not stand alone in our concerns about the details of the act. Experts like Michael Geist and Howard Knopf are both critics of these very strong digital law provisions. We have had more than 80 arts and cultural organizations express their concern about fair compensation for artists. We have had concerns expressed by the Writers Guild of Canada and the Society of Composers, Authors and Music Publishers.

When we come to consider the bill after second reading, I would ask all members to join us at the committee stage in standing up for artists to ensure their income stream continues, for students to ensure they have access to the materials they need for their education and for consumers to ensure they can use material they have already paid for in ways that are non-threatening to producers.

We need to ensure the benefits of the copyright reform flow to the actual creative artists, students and consumers, not just to the major U.S. media companies, the big movie studios and big recording companies. We need to ensure this is a copyright act that benefits ordinary Canadians and those who work hard in our creative industries every day to make this a brighter and better country where we understand each other better through the medium of arts and culture.

• (1705)

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Marc-André Morin (Laurentides—Labelle, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask my colleague whether he thinks that this bill will protect creators and artists the same way Bill C-13 will protect refugees by taking away their means of integrating into society and being productive.

Something like a tablet has no value without any content from creators. If people are not protected and compensated for their work, I do not see how our society will be able to advance.

[*English*]

**Mr. Randall Garrison:** Mr. Speaker, my colleague raises the very good point that I was alluding to at the end of my speech. It is the arts and culture industries that help us understand ourselves as a society. It is the arts and culture industries that help us look at the social problems that we face and find ways to live together better.

We need to be very careful in amending this Copyright Act that we do not undermine the existing income streams of the arts and culture industries, but that, instead, we reform the act in ways that will help them earn additional income and make them more secure in the future so they can continue that important work which helps us understand ourselves better.

**Mr. Ted Hsu (Kingston and the Islands, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, could the member for Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca tell us a little bit about some specific amendments that he would propose that would help improve the income stream to artists?

My brother is an underemployed musician.

*Government Orders*

**Mr. Randall Garrison:** Mr. Speaker, in second reading, we are talking about the principles of the bill. Therefore, what we are talking about here is the need to catch up with technology and ensure that one of the very positive things in the bill says that we will review it every five years to ensure we keep up with technological change.

The concept I really want to talk about is that income stream and ensuring it flows to the artists and the actual producers and not to the major multinational corporations.

The concept of digital locks that is in the bill is one that really does not help the original producer. It only protects those big distributors who probably already undervalued that content and allows them to protect their huge profits at the same time, when most of the artists receive very little in terms of income for their work.

**Mr. Peter Julian (Burnaby—New Westminster, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, the member for Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca has been involved in the educational sector for some time.

What we have is a badly botched bill from the government, and one of the botched aspects of the bill is the 30 day retroactive book burning of textbooks.

How does the member feel his students would react when their textbooks, which they received electronically, are burned retroactively after 30 days?

**Mr. Randall Garrison:** Mr. Speaker, one of the things I observed over the last few years with my students is that many of them could not afford to buy hard copies of textbooks. They are looking for new ways with lower costs to try to access educational materials.

I taught in the area of Canadian criminal justice and, as instructors we all know that textbook costs are extremely high for the hard copies. Students really need those alternative ways of accessing information. They need those books for a semester, not 30 days, and they probably need them for longer than that because most of the courses in the program that I taught build on each other and, therefore, students will want to keep those previous resources so they can do better in the next class they are taking. They are not using them to profit. They are not selling them on to somebody else.

Like my previous colleague from Newton—North Delta, who still has her notes in a box in the basement, they will probably keep these materials for a very long time and continue to use them as they launch into their professional careers.

This 30 day retroactive book burning is a very pernicious part of the bill. I hope at the committee stage we can remove that provision.

• (1710)

[Translation]

**Mr. Réjean Genest (Shefford, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise in the House to speak about this bill.

This is an opportunity for me to wear several hats: I am a member of the House of Commons and an author. My occupation as a gardener led to me write several books on the subject.

I would like to say that the work of an author requires perseverance, discipline, determination and confidence. It is mostly

solitary work. There is so much work to do that a book like mine can take three or four years to be published.

Copyright is a way of expressing respect for the author. Once again, I do not see the rights of the author in this bill. There is talk of respect but I do not see dividends for authors. As a producer and an author, I created and produced over 500 episodes of a gardening show on community television. For several years, I found it very enjoyable but that ended when my work was copied by others in both the format and the approach. There was nothing I could do. As an author, I created a gardening website of over 1,500 pages, which I have been maintaining since 1998. When you publish something on the Internet in French, you are speaking to the entire Francophonie. There too, my work was copied countless times and, as an author, I had no recourse.

In the government's bill, I do not see any possibility of recourse for authors or any way for authors to obtain payment from the party that copied their material. Various people will get a slap on the wrist but, in the end, the author's work has been copied and he or she has not been reimbursed. I know something about it. On the Internet, people often wrote to me to tell me that my pages had been copied and posted in various locations but I really could not do much about it. I even saw a world horticultural encyclopedia containing complete passages from my work. I had to exert pressure to have my work removed. As an author, I also had no recourse. In the bill, I see ways that the government could help an author to have recourse.

Authors earn a small income, often below minimum wage, but I do not see anything in the government's bill that would help an author whose work has been copied. There is a project in Quebec, somewhere in Montreal or elsewhere, that has been making headlines for years. Everyone knows that it was copied but nothing has been done. If the government wanted to take responsibility, it would find a way to make a system available to authors and legal experts whereby authors could be reimbursed by the parties who copy their work.

I am an author and I have written books, 10 of which are ready to be published. I am waiting to have the means to publish them, because the dividends paid to authors for the publication of books are between 5% and 10%, and they are paid out a year and a half later. In addition, nothing can be confirmed.

• (1715)

Personally, I plan to self-publish my books. Once again, the government has all kinds of legislation that helps publishing companies, but nothing that helps authors to self-publish. When will this government start taking care of authors and thinking like an author? Singers and people who record music were forced to create their own labels. Why is it that this government refuses to help people who want to self-publish? I do not understand.

Is there anything more logical and simple? We want to help people, but we want to penalize pirates and other offenders. Penalizing pirates will not help authors; it is a question of finding ways for authors to get what is owing to them.



*Government Orders*

Bill C-11 is identical to Bill C-32 from the previous Parliament. Artists from Quebec came here to Parliament Hill. Let us not forget their demands. This bill does not give artists any dividends. Consumers purchase songs or various things on the Web and copy entire pages of creations from the Web, but nothing goes to the artists. No dividends at all. When will this government bring forward a serious bill for authors, instead of just focusing on building prisons?

Indeed, it seems the government has big plans to increase the number of prisons in this country. We would prefer a bill that ensures that anyone who steals from authors would have to pay them back and not get out of it by declaring bankruptcy and going to prison. The artists must be paid back. We must find a way to ensure that offenders' goods are seized for longer than just a few years. The seizure should last many, many years so that the person has no choice but to pay back the author.

I wish the Conservatives would really act in favour of authors' needs and not in favour of the needs of their cronies. This is about the authors.

**Mr. Ted Hsu (Kingston and the Islands, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask the hon. member an open-ended question. How can we compensate artists for lost income?

**Mr. Réjean Genest:** Mr. Speaker, I was looking for my earpiece because we are far apart and I did not hear the question. Could the member please ask it again?

**The Speaker:** I do not think that the hon. member for Shefford heard the question. There may be a problem with the translation.

[*English*]

I will give the floor to the member for Kingston and the Islands. He can repeat his question so the member for Shefford can answer.

• (1720)

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Ted Hsu:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It may have been my fault.

I completely agree that we should support artists. Could the hon. member tell me how we could compensate artists for lost income?

**Mr. Réjean Genest:** It is not complicated, Mr. Speaker. There is a royalty for someone who produces a CD-ROM. Normally, an arrangement is made and he receives royalties every time the CD-ROM is copied. It is very, very simple. When someone publishes a book, the author always receives royalties. The royalties owed to the author are calculated and then paid out to him. The same thing happens with a song, for example. The standard royalty is determined on a case-by-case basis. And that is how the creator is compensated. It seems quite simple to me.

I would like to thank the member for his question.

**Mr. Mathieu Ravignat (Pontiac, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the hon. member for his very interesting speech. In his view, does the difficulty authors have getting their work recognized represent a major challenge in stimulating the cultural industry in our country?

**Mr. Réjean Genest:** Mr. Speaker, the major problem right now is technology. These days, we can copy a movie with a mini-camera at

a movie theatre without being noticed. With all this technology, we can copy at every turn. It is indeed challenging to find a solution to this problem. We will never completely resolve the problem because there will always be someone who finds a way to get around things.

Regardless of whether we are talking about the movie, music or book industry, the works of artists and authors are being copied. There are even sculptors whose works are being copied with moulds and so on. It is a problem. The government has to put the right people in the right places to find solutions for each problem, and not five years after the problem has surfaced. We have to constantly address this in each field. The government has to protect the rights of Canadians and the rights of creators who contribute in their own way to Canada's good reputation.

**Mr. Guy Caron (Rimouski-Neigette—Témiscouata—Les Basques, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I will be sharing my time with the member for Manicouagan.

We are very pleased to see that this government wants to take action to modernize the Copyright Act. These changes are long overdue. We are open to making changes. However, we would be even more receptive if the result was a balance that would benefit all stakeholders. The problem is that, contrary to what the government is saying, there is no balance in Bill C-11, as was the case for its predecessor, Bill C-32.

This bill will have fairly significant repercussions for authors, artists and consumers. Once again, despite the fact that the government says that the bill is balanced, we see that various associations and very important organizations representing the stakeholders do not concur.

First, let us talk about authors. We believe that they stand to lose the most with Bill C-11. The majority of writers' associations were opposed to Bill C-32 and now are opposed to Bill C-11, and with good cause. I would like to talk about one organization in particular, DAMI©, which is based in Montreal. DAMI© stands for Droit d'auteur Multimédia Internet Copyright. It is the umbrella organization for 13 professional associations of artists, authors, performers and copyright collectives. DAMI© represents 50,000 cultural artisans who are members of these 13 associations. What did DAMI© have to say about Bill C-32, which, I repeat, is now Bill C-11, currently under review? It had serious misgivings about Bill C-32, especially because of the free use of works protected by about 40 exceptions, half of which are new exceptions being made with respect to the current act.

I would like to read an excerpt from the DAMI© submission on Bill C-32, which, I repeat, is very pertinent because this is the same bill now being studied as Bill C-11.

### *Government Orders*

Thanks to this bill, teachers will be able to use protected works [we are obviously talking about education] in their classes without asking permission, and they will be able to reproduce their course work to broadcast it by telecommunication in the context of remote or distance teaching. They will also be able to reproduce works in their totality for the purpose of display on interactive whiteboards or computer screens. Schools will no longer have to pay royalties to record news programs for pedagogical purposes, to present films, or to perform plays, for which they will be able to reproduce the sets, costumes, and lighting designs created by professional artists. This is a total expropriation of the intellectual property rights of creators in the educational sector. It is as if the government had declared that from now on literary, theatre, musical, and artistic works will be considered collective property.

This is in reference to education, but another important point to consider, especially at the university level, is the issue of the academic book market in Quebec. It is no secret that Quebec is an island of 7 million francophones in a sea of over 300 million anglophones in North America. The American book market serves primarily the Canadian English-speaking market. We need a strong academic book market in Quebec to be able to protect our culture, so that we can adapt or examine various issues—such as the economy, philosophy or other university subjects—from a Quebec and francophone perspective. This book market is small compared to the English-speaking American and Canadian market. It must fight against assimilation and against greater integration of these books that are quite often translated into French, but do not reflect Quebec's point of view or a francophone perspective, even in Canada.

This bill could end up further weakening the academic book market in Quebec—for university texts, for example—and creating even more problems for this market. The industry in Quebec will have to face more challenges if it wants to survive.

• (1725)

What justification will be given if the across-the-board use of photocopying is permitted or there is no adequate compensation for the authors of these books, as mentioned by DAMIC? What motivation will Quebecers, and francophones across Canada, have to write a book that truly reflects the francophone and Quebec philosophy, vision and point of view? There will be no such books in the future.

This bill represents a real threat to an industry that is living on borrowed time in Quebec. That is why we are calling on the government to work with us to establish greater balance in this bill and ensure that all stakeholders benefit, not just the companies that own intellectual property, which are heavily favoured at this time. In response to our government colleagues' comments, this to a large extent explains why they have the support of John Manley, among others, and it will come as no surprise that he is the president and CEO of the Canadian Council of Chief Executives. However, they will not have the support of authors' organizations, artists' organizations and copyright collectives.

Nor will they obtain, despite what they claim, the approval, the consent or the support of consumer associations. As it stands, the bill does not permit consumers to make backup copies or transfer the documents they have purchased—content for which they have paid and enjoy certain consumer rights—to other formats. The Writers Guild of Canada, among others, raised this problem. This organization stated that the only option that Bill C-11 gives creators is the addition of a digital lock, which has the effect of impinging upon current revenue streams for creators and creates a defect in the

bill by depriving consumers of the very rights that are guaranteed them elsewhere in the bill.

The government said it was giving copyright owners a tool for developing and marketing their products and earning an income. It said it was protecting creators against acts of piracy. Although it is true that digital locks worked or can work when it comes to software, they are too restrictive and very unpopular when it comes to entertainment content. They risk being discriminated against by market rules, as they were in the case of music. Digital locks do not allow for progress and do not help defend the interests of consumers and creators. At best, digital locks will simply block current sources of income for creators.

This income is nevertheless very important. If this bill passes in its current form, authors, artists and cultural artisans could lose more than \$125 million in income a year. That is why we are calling on the government to work with the NDP in order to amend the bill. We welcome the desire to modernize legislation, especially since this modernization has been a long time coming, but it has to be done properly. Unfortunately, Bill C-11, as currently worded, does not benefit all stakeholders equally. We want to work with the government to ensure that everyone benefits and to modernize the Copyright Act in a coherent and lasting way.

• (1730)

**Mr. Peter Julian (Burnaby—New Westminster, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, once again, I thank the member for Rimouski-Neigette—Témiscouata—Les Basques, the riding with the longest name in the country, which has elected an excellent member, for his speech.

He talked about all the problems this bill raises. We are well aware that even though the Conservatives had several years to do their job, they did not do it well. They botched the job, and this has resulted in a bill that raises a lot of problems. We have talked about them this afternoon and we will continue to talk about them in the days to come.

I have a few questions for the member. What are the biggest problems with this bill? Does it have to do with burning all the books, the students' notebooks, 30 days after their classes end? Is it the fact that artists are not compensated? What does he think are the biggest problems with this bill?

**Mr. Guy Caron:** Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague for his question.



In fact, this bill is extremely complex and technical. That is why we have identified a number of weaknesses. The one relating to the destruction of materials, of course notes, after 30 days is a striking problem, but the main problem I see in this bill is the lost income for authors, creators and artisans. At the end of the day, if we are not able to protect that drive to create—and that is what the objective of the Copyright Act should be—then that will present a problem. The same will be true if we do not find ways to modernize the law and at the same time adapt the flow of income that creators are able to receive. That is what was done in the past when new media were developed, when we saw, first, the vinyl record. Then we got CDs, DVDs and so on. We managed to adapt the flow of income to these new facts of life, one way or another. This bill does not do that. In fact, this bill could interfere with those sources of income by jeopardizing the income of artisans, creators and artists; it could be a disincentive to that flow of creativity and diminish creators' ability to disseminate Quebec and Canadian content on a large scale.

• (1735)

**Mrs. Sadia Groguhé (Saint-Lambert, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to congratulate my hon. colleague on his very informative speech.

My question for him is this: if we wanted to keep the title of the bill as is, a bill to modernize copyright, what are some of the main amendments he would propose?

**Mr. Guy Caron:** Mr. Speaker, I thank my hon. colleague for her question.

Hopefully, that kind of discussion would take place in committee. The committee members could propose various paths. Coming back to an academic perspective, I think measures to protect Quebec's book market would be necessary, particularly for professional books and text books. This has been done in the past. In a university, books and other materials can be photocopied, but this is done with dividends through various organizations that can then pass them on to the authors. In the case of new materials and new possible ways of offering courses, we need to be able to adapt and allow some flexibility, while still ensuring a dividend. This bill contains 40 exceptions, where content can be used without any compensation to authors. This must be changed. There must be a mechanism to allow these dividends to make their way to the artists so that they will be encouraged to continue their creative process.

**Mr. Jonathan Genest-Jourdain (Manicouagan, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, this speech is in line with my previous speeches and came about as a result of my thoughts on whether the current government is truly willing to protect and promote the public interest.

The purpose of the bill before us is basically to replace the current Copyright Act. Those present in the House all agree that this is necessary. Social and technological realities are, by definition, constantly changing and it is important to have legislative tools adapted to the current global economy, in which massive amounts of information are constantly being transferred electronically.

Both sides admit that the letter of the Copyright Act must indeed be modernized; however, the text of the bill proposed by the Conservatives does not address a number of key issues. As a result, the proposed solution could prove to be more risky and problematic than truly innovative and functional.

### *Government Orders*

The opinion of a number of experts on the issue disputes the legitimacy of certain elements and even the adoption of such provisions by the federal legislative body since many issues addressed in the bill actually overlap with areas under provincial jurisdiction.

The legislative exercise must involve weighing the pros and cons. Given that the desired outcome of this exercise is to update a law on so-called progressive materials, the government must support an approach that strikes a balance between the rights of consumers and the rights of content owners.

Taking into account current practices in arts and technology, this bill favours major industry players, the ones that ultimately hold the prerogative power associated with copyright. I will now explain all the concepts associated with licensing and the transfer of ownership.

The agreements binding creators to stakeholders in the arts and culture industry in Canada make systematic use of provisions granting licences or transferring the rights of a creator to the benefit of major industry players. In addition, the real winners of Bill C-11 are the large movie studios and record labels, not Canadian artists and consumers.

Since I come from a family of artists, I was able to witness firsthand the terrible consequences related to the inequality of power that is common in the artistic production sector in its broadest sense.

As an illustration, I will delve into empirical studies by sharing a story about something that happened to my father. My father is an author-composer-performer who speaks Innu almost exclusively. Like me, he comes from the Uashat mak Mani-Utenam community. In the early 1990s, he went to the United States to promote culture and perform.

During his time in the United States, a digital recording was made of his voice while he was singing time-honoured songs from thousands of years ago. Some say that that is in the public domain, but someone made a digital recording of his voice and when he came back to Canada many years later, he was surprised to hear the recording in a major American film, of which millions of copies had been distributed. It was difficult for him to understand how his recording had ended up in a Columbia Pictures film. But nothing came of it and he still has a bad taste in his mouth when he thinks about what happened.

*Government Orders*

Next I want to talk about sharing. I will talk about the traditional way of looking at information sharing. This link with the sharing of traditional aboriginal knowledge is relevant in analyzing the situation before us. While first nations have thus far had limited recourse to Canadian laws pertaining to intellectual property to protect creations resulting from their traditions, it is recognized that unauthorized copies of works by groups and communities; the appropriation of aboriginal themes and images; artist copyright infringement; culturally inappropriate use of aboriginal images and styles by non-aboriginal creators and the exclusive appropriation of traditional knowledge without compensation are quite common within socially deprived communities.

• (1740)

Now, when I say “appropriation without compensation”, that is a direct reference to the pharmaceutical advance that resulted from traditional knowledge the indigenous people had on the land. When I talk about indigenous people, we may go as far away as New Guinea and Australia, but here in Canada, we know that the pharmaceutical and pharmacological industry has drawn on traditional knowledge on the centuries-old use of plants on the land. Today, there are multitudes of medications that derive from that direct application. There is a recognition, in a sense, of the contribution of the Innu and indigenous people in general, but very few patents, in my opinion, have been issued to the indigenous nations.

It goes without saying that the proposed legislation does not answer any of the considerations raised by the indigenous communities and highlighted in the study entitled “Indigenous Traditional Knowledge and Intellectual Property Rights”, prepared by the Parliamentary Research Branch in response to a request in 2004. In addition, the bill to modernize copyright will allow a third party to establish a system of digital locks that will supersede virtually all other rights that may be exercised by the indigenous nations over their ancestral works.

As we can see, the imbalance of power that can be observed in the arts industry gives rise to appalling situations, a reality that has unfortunately eluded the text of the bill. The proposed legislation simply exacerbates the disadvantage the artist is at, for the benefit of recording and movie studios that have enormous resources at their disposal for creating a system of digital locks that will supersede virtually all other rights provided in the legislation. Ultimately, this practice will enable the industry to protect its declining capacity to generate enormous profits.

Regarding the concepts of licence and assignment of rights, these are usual clauses that we see in contracts: the artist is not in a position to bargain since most often they are presented with a standard form contract. The clauses already exist. Assignment is a little rarer, but explicit licences are included and the artist is then bound by them. The artist has very few rights, other than the moral right in respect of the ultimate use made of their work, and they are not in a position to stand up to the armada of lawyers who work for the industry.

The government must therefore amend the provisions relating to digital locks before this bill is passed. Apart from its negative effects on artists' income expectations, that measure grants exorbitant

powers to the rights holders, the players in an already very well-off industry.

• (1745)

**Mr. Alain Giguère (Marc-Aurèle-Fortin, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, my question is for my colleague. How can this legislation, which gives priority to the development of a digital economy, respect the culture and artistic performances of the members of a nation that needs to be respected merely to continue to exist and to have a cultural life?

**Mr. Jonathan Genest-Jourdain:** Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his question. He will agree with me that social considerations carry very little weight on the other side of this House. This is a pattern that we are going to see in the coming years, namely that those who detain the monetary and economic power will always prevail over those who care about other considerations, whether environmental, cultural or social. The legislation before us today is no exception and it is a reflection of that pattern.

[English]

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the member talked about aboriginal artists. Aboriginal artists and artists from all ethnic backgrounds have a great deal to contribute. Many of those contributions come from their heritage. It is one way we are able to benefit from the rich heritage of many of the communities that make up our beautiful country. I believe it is one of the reasons the government overlooks the importance of those artists. We should encourage that aspect of the industry. We can do a lot more in terms of supporting it.

Would the member give a general observation in terms of what he believes the impact of the bill would be on that industry? Also, would he agree that there is much more that we could be doing for that industry?

[Translation]

**Mr. Jonathan Genest-Jourdain:** Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member for his question. As regards communities, I am always going to refer to my own community, namely the Innu of Uashat Mak Mani-Utenam. One should realize that they are not at all familiar with the debates that are taking place in this House, particularly in the case of the current bill.

One should also realize that my community is very distrustful and rather reluctant to share its information and culture, for reasons that are now rather obvious. There have been problems like embezzlement and abuse, whether on a cultural or other level. So, it goes without saying that implementing the measures proposed in this legislation will not improve dialogue, and even less so the sharing because, ultimately, it is the industry that will hold the key and enjoy all the privileges. The artist as such will be pushed aside and will play a very minor role.

**Mr. Romeo Saganash (Abitibi—Baie-James—Nunavik—Eeyou, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague from Manicouagan for his excellent speech in this House.



My question is similar to the one asked by my colleague who spoke before me about the impact of the bill. The situation of aboriginal artists is quite unique. Does this bill take that into account, or have aboriginal artists again been forgotten in this bill to modernize the act?

• (1750)

**Mr. Jonathan Genest-Jourdain:** Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his question. The text of the bill makes no mention of aboriginal people, contrary to the 2004 study, which was carried out by Parliament. It makes one wonder if people were paying attention. At the time, aboriginal groups pointed out what they needed and wanted. This bill, which updates the Copyright Act, clearly pays very little, if any, attention to the transmittal and protection of ancestral knowledge and the expression of oral culture. We all know that ours is a predominantly oral culture. It is marginalized, as it always has been.

[English]

**Mr. Ted Hsu (Kingston and the Islands, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I will be sharing my time with the member for Westmount—Ville-Marie.

Copyright legislation, the issue of digital locks and Bill C-32 have accompanied me from the beginning of my political journey a couple of years ago.

I live in a riding that has a large population of post-secondary students, and when I said I was running for the nomination in the riding, many of them wanted to talk to me about Bill C-32 and the concerns they had over the digital lock provisions in that bill. These are students. These are text savvy people. Many of them are the next generation of artists and creators. The bill is important to me.

Copyright is at the heart of how our society treats creators, artists, musicians, and composers. It is very important that we recognize their contribution, that we value what they have created, and the value that it brings to our society.

My brother is one of these people. He is a musician. He is a jazz saxophonist. He teaches for a living. He plays. Sometimes he records. It matters to me a lot that our artists are treated fairly.

However, every time technology changes there is a need to modify copyright law. A very simple example of that is photocopying. When it becomes much easier to copy a book, we have to think about what that means for protecting written material. When it becomes very easy to copy music, we have to think about how to adjust our copyright laws. One thing that has happened in the past to deal with that adjustment is that a levy has been imposed on the sale of cassettes and CDs to compensate artists for the work they have done.

Now we are in an age where technology has changed again, very radically. I am sure that when I was a young person, nobody had on their desks all the things I have: a phone, a couple of computers, and so on. Technology is all around us and we can copy all sorts of digital material from one device to another.

It is very important that the legislation before us is technology neutral. Probably the best way to talk about technology as far as this legislation is concerned is just to ignore all the technology in front of us and just think about all the copies of digital materials in the cloud,

on the Internet. We do not even have to think about the hardware in front of us.

It is important to have digital locks, since a lot of copyrighted material, material that is created by our artists, writers, musicians, is in the cloud, but we can improve this legislation as it pertains to digital locks.

The students I met with very early on in my political career were very quick to bring this to my attention, which is that digital locks should not trump the other rights that are being given to consumers in this legislation. Consumers should have the right to buy material and to copy it for their own use. Students should have the ability to have copies of materials so that they can learn.

A really good example of that is something my brother, the musician whom I want to get back to, related to me. I really did not appreciate it, but when he explained it to me, things suddenly became very clear. My brother says that the training, education of musicians today, as compared to, say, 20 years ago, is radically different. The reason why it is radically different is because young musicians today can listen to a lot more music than they could have 20 years ago, a lot more variations of music from around the world.

• (1755)

That is because of the Internet. Not only does the Internet allow a lot of different kinds of music and creative things to be brought to people, but a lot of creative people can communicate what they have created to others around the world through the Internet. This is a tool for the next generation of creators and artists and people who are creating.

This is really something special that has changed how artists, musicians and writers are being trained and educated. They are really able to immerse themselves in what is happening around them and what has been in the past as well.

I think it is very important that we take a bit of time. I hope this happens in committee, if the bill goes to committee. We must be more careful about defining fair dealing and education. I am not so sure what my brother related to me, this training of musicians which is not necessarily in schools and not necessarily in a formal setting, if that is something that would be properly considered in a definition of education.

As far as fair dealing is concerned, there are definitions that we could incorporate into the bill. The Supreme Court has made rulings about what fair dealing means in certain cases and has established certain criteria. These criteria could, I understand, be incorporated into the bill.

That is why in the recent amendment that has been brought forward by my party there are two provisions. One is to first of all uphold the rights of consumers to choose how they enjoy the content that they purchase, to avoid the overly restrictive digital lock provisions that would seem to take away the rights that are being granted consumers in this legislation, which does not make sense. The second is to take some time and write down a clear and strict test for fair dealing for education purposes.

### *Points of Order*

There is a lot of controversy over this legislation. There are people for it and against it, and it is probably because, in my humble opinion, the legislation could be made clearer. Forgive me for throwing out this example, but I often find that in my experience as a scientist, if people disagree about something we should really sit down and look at the numbers and write down the equations, put everything on the table and define the terms more carefully. Often, in the field of science and research a lot of disagreements melt away when definitions are made precise and people look at actual numbers and hard data.

It makes sense to me, from my experience, that if we were to take some time and write down clear definitions of fair dealing and education in the exceptions to the copyright protections in the legislation that we could probably resolve some of the controversy around the legislation.

The third provision in the reasoned amendment is that there are certain streams of revenue that will be affected by this copyright legislation. We should take some time and think about how the streams of revenue will be affected and think about providing transitional funding for artists who adapt to the changes and the loss of some revenue streams that would be caused by the bill.

These are the reasons why the provisions in the reasoned amendment make sense to me. That is why my party and I are supporting this reasoned amendment.

• (1800)

**Mr. Mike Lake (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Industry, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I find the hon. member's proposal kind of interesting. He talks about the amendment like it is just a simple amendment to a bill. This is of course a bill that has been consulted on probably more than just about any bill that I have seen in six years here. There have been thousands and thousands of submissions, 39 hours of committee testimony, and the Liberals today have introduced an amendment that the House decline to give second reading to the bill.

It is not an amendment to make changes to the bill, just an amendment to wipe out the bill altogether, instead of going through the process of continuing the committee hearings that we have had, and hearing from witnesses that have not had a chance to appear yet. The Liberals would just wipe out the 12 years, I think it has been, of consultation on the bill and four different iterations of the bill to this point.

In the interests of co-operating, why would the Liberal Party not just bring forward suggestions for amendments according to the regular process, get those to the committee stage, and put ideas on the table there as opposed to wiping out the bill here today?

**Mr. Ted Hsu:** Mr. Speaker, I assure the member that Liberals will be proposing amendments. If we wanted to jettison this bill, we would have proposed a hoist motion. The reasoned amendment allows us to specify the reasons why we oppose this bill going to second reading and they are very clear. I read them out before and will not read them again. They explain what is wrong and the sorts of amendments that should be made.

The member talked about all of the testimony that was given. Why did the Conservative government not look at all of that testimony

and maybe make a few changes between the legislation that appeared in the last Parliament and Bill C-11 that is before us today? There were no changes made, so I do not believe the government has really paid attention to all of that testimony.

**Mr. Don Davies (Vancouver Kingsway, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I have received a lot of correspondence from constituents about Bill C-11. I received an email from a constituent named Mark Burge, who said what I thought was very thoughtful. He said, "A solution to Bill C-11's contentious core problem and the means to avoid the unintended consequences generated by the broad protection for digital locks is to amend the Bill to permit the circumvention of digital locks when done for lawful purposes. This approach is compliant with the WIPO Internet Treaties, provides legal protection for digital locks, and maintains a much better copyright balance—".

He urges the House to either add an infringing purpose requirement to the prohibition of circumvention or add an exception to the legislation to address circumvention for lawful purposes. Mr. Burge believes that in addition to linking the prohibition of circumvention to the act of infringement, it is paramount for consumers to have commercial access to the tools required to facilitate such lawful acts.

I am wondering if my hon. colleague would care to comment on what I think are some very thoughtful suggestions from someone who clearly has studied this issue in my riding.

**Mr. Ted Hsu:** Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for his comments, which accord very much with what I have been hearing from my constituents, many of whom understand the need for digital locks but also concede that the digital lock provisions are too stringent. They go beyond the need to protect lawful uses of material. It makes a lot of sense and I hope the member and his party will propose those amendments in committee.

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### **POINTS OF ORDER**

BILL C-371—INCOME TAX ACT

**Mr. Joe Comartin (Windsor—Tecumseh, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order regarding Bill C-317, An Act to amend the Income Tax Act (labour organizations), standing in the name of the member for South Surrey—White Rock—Cloverdale.

The bill proposes to amend the Income Tax Act in an effort to force labour organizations to submit for all to see, that is complete public disclosure, an incredibly onerous level of detailed financial information about their work on behalf of their members. While labour organizations already abide by financial disclosure rules, mostly imposed at the provincial level of government, they do that because it ensures they are accountable to their members and not just because they are driven by legislation.

The bill, which is mostly ideologically motivated, would seek to expose virtually every last detail of a labour organization's financial books. The risk of this is that it gives access to other business organizations in which members may be involved in labour negotiations or labour disputes, exposing their knowledge base to some risk in that regard.



*Points of Order*

Aside from the privacy concerns over making this level of financial detail available to the public, it shows the thrust of the government, as we have seen with the labour disputes, back-to-work legislation recently and more threats of it at this point, but that culminates now by a government member bringing forth as a private member's bill what should in fact be a government bill, and that is really where my point of order lies. By imposing these types of conditions Conservatives, they are precipitating action that should only be precipitated by a government bill.

The measures set out in the bill include a threat of delisting the labour organization for non-compliance. One of the points that has been missed in this regard about its consequences, because we are not just talking about national labour organizations or national unions, is it includes a local labour council, a union local, even a small one of say 20 or 30 members, a national labour organization, or even a federation of labour. It covers all of them. My concern with the admissibility of the bill is it would have the effect of raising taxes, which is the exclusive prerogative of ministers in the House of Commons and cannot be done by private members' business. At page 1114 of *House of Commons Procedure and Practice*, second edition, it states:

The power to initiate taxation rests solely with the government and any legislation which seeks an increase in taxation must be preceded by a ways and means motion.

As a result of this and the reasons I will set out in greater detail shortly, Mr. Speaker, I would ask you to rule that the proceedings on the bill to date, namely its introduction and first reading, which it already had, have not respected the provisions of our Standing Orders and are therefore null and void and further that you direct that the order for second reading of Bill C-317 be discharged and the bill be withdrawn from the order paper. Those are the two orders I would be seeking from you, Mr. Speaker.

To begin, I draw attention to Speaker Milliken's ruling on November 28, 2007, at pages 1463-64 of *Debates*. Therein he references page 896 of Erskine May's *Parliamentary Practice* 23rd edition, which states quite clearly, "

—“the repeal or reduction of existing alleviations of taxation” must be preceded by a Ways and Means motion.

It is not a discretionary call. It is a must situation.

It is clear to me and I suspect that you will agree, Mr. Speaker, that the income tax exemptions that apply to labour organizations and the reduction of taxable income as a result of writing off the dues paid by their members would easily qualify as alleviations of taxation. Further, the provisions of Bill C-317 would repeal those alleviations by terminating the labour organization's Income Tax Act exempt status.

Furthermore, while the *House of Commons Procedure and Practice*, second edition, at page 900, lists four limited categories of charges on the people, which would require a ways and means motion before tabling in the House, if you trace this passage back to the primary source of the reference, Mr. Speaker, you will find what seems to be much more clearly worded guidelines. I would ask you to pay particular attention because there seems to be, and I will not say a contradiction, greater clarity if we go further back in our history in this regard.

● (1805)

Citation 980 of Beauchesne's *Parliamentary Rules & Forms* sixth edition, on page 265 states that a:

Ways and Means motion is a necessary preliminary to...an extension of the incidence of a tax so as to include persons not already payers.

“Persons not already payers” is a much more specific restriction than creating a new class of taxpayers, which is the guideline set out at page 900 of the *House of Commons Procedure and Practice*, which I cited a moment ago. It is the difference between finding that a bill creates a new type of taxpayer and finding that a bill creates taxpayers out of those who did not pay tax before.

In the case of the 41st Parliament Bill C-317, examples are readily available to illustrate how the incidence of the federal income tax on dues-paying members of a labour organization might be extended under the proposed changes to the Income Tax Act to make federal income taxpayers out of persons who previously were not. Therefore, we are creating new taxpayers.

Consider if you will, Mr. Speaker, the hypothetical case of a dues-paying member of a labour organization who pays no federal income tax because the member's taxable income falls just short of the amount covered by the personal income tax exemption. If this person's labour organization were to lose its ITA exempt status for failing to meet the conditions set out under the provisions of Bill C-317, his or her membership dues would no longer be excluded from personal taxable income. This increase in taxable income could easily push his or her taxable income to an amount over that which is exempt, effectively creating a federal income taxpayer where there was not one before, which is the very definition of Beauchesne's description of what is not permissible in this place without a preceding ways and means motion, which only can be brought by the government of the day.

I am anticipating an argument from the government side on the private member's bill, so I reviewed a precedent on this matter. I fear there may be a temptation to use Speaker Milliken's decision of March 15, 2010, on Bill C-470 from the 40th Parliament, as a relevant precedent to the question on hand today, so I will ask you, Mr. Speaker to take extra caution when reviewing the decision. While there are some similarities between the two bills, I would submit that the many differences will lead you to rule the opposite particularly when using the much more specific delineation of the rule in question as laid out in Beauchesne's.

### *Points of Order*

I am not sure it will be necessary in your deliberations, Mr. Speaker, but I would draw to your attention just one of the many important differences between the two bills, the one in the 40th Parliament and this one today, which is the stark contrast between labour organizations and charitable ones. In particular, members of labour organizations would continue to have an obligation to pay their membership dues, as they do under provincial legislation, even in the event of the organization's delisting from ITA exempt status, whereas charity donors' contributions are completely discretionary. Finally, labour organizations are selected, supported and held accountable by the very dues-paying members who make the financial contributions in the first place. Charities are not.

In conclusion, Mr. Speaker, I would again ask that you rule that the proceedings to date under Bill C-317, An Act to amend the Income Tax Act (labour organizations) standing in the name of the member for South Surrey—White Rock—Cloverdale namely, the introduction and first reading, have not respected the provisions of our Standing Orders and are therefore null and void and that you direct that the order for second reading of Bill C-317 be discharged and the bill withdrawn from the order paper.

• (1810)

It is quite clear that the bill should be presented, if it is going to be presented at all, by the government of the day. It would bring forth a ways and means motion and then the proper bill would flow from that. This attempt to do it through the back door by way of a private member's bill is really a serious breach of the Standing Orders of the House.

**The Speaker:** I thank the hon. member for his intervention.

Is the hon. member for Kitchener—Conestoga.

**Mr. Harold Albrecht (Kitchener—Conestoga, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to respond to a couple of the points raised by my colleague across the way regarding the bill.

First, his implication that this should be a government bill takes away from the freedom that private members have to promote legislation. I think he is jumping to conclusions in making that conclusion.

Second, the member will know that there is already a mechanism in place that vets these bills. There is a group, the private members subcommittee of procedure and House affairs, that meets to discern whether bills are votable or not. In fact, there will be a report tabled tomorrow in that regard, particularly in relation to the bill.

Third, it is obvious that the mover of the bill is not present today and at the very least he should be given an opportunity to respond to the issues that were raised by my colleague.

I would ask you, Mr. Speaker, to defer action on this until appropriate submissions are allowed on behalf of the member.

• (1815)

**Mr. Joe Comartin:** Mr. Speaker, with regard to the final point that the member makes, there is certainly no objection to the member who authored this bill being given the opportunity to speak to it and present whatever argument contrary to the motion I made.

However, as members know, private member's bills, and this is the very first one on the list, will start Thursday evening of this week. I

would ask that the member bring forth his arguments as quickly as possible.

I would then ask you, Mr. Speaker, to make your decision as quickly as possible.

**The Speaker:** I thank both hon. members for their intervention. I will take it under advisement but, as was suggested, I will be interested in hearing from the member who initiated the private member's bill and any other interested members who may want to have a say or who have some advice on it.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

### **COPYRIGHT MODERNIZATION ACT**

The House resumed consideration of the motion that Bill C-11, An Act to amend the Copyright Act, be read the second time and referred to a committee, and of the amendment.

**Mr. Marc Garneau (Westmount—Ville-Marie, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise and speak to this extremely important copyright bill. When I was the science and technology critic before the last election, I had the pleasure of sitting on the committee that addressed this extremely important issue which, as we know, goes back a long way.

[English]

Canada, of course, signed on to the WIPO treaty back in the 1990s. We all know that it has been a long tortuous road with respect to modernizing our copyright bill. We in the Liberal Party attempted to do so; unfortunately, with changes in government and other things, it did not happen, so here we are today with Bill C-11.

I participated in a legislative committee before the election when the bill was known as Bill C-32. As has been pointed out many times today already, there is no change in the wording of Bill C-11 versus Bill C-32.

This is surprising to me. In reality we listened to a very large number of witnesses from many different fields. They represented what I would call the three main stakeholders: industry, the producers of video games, movies, music sets, electronic books and those kinds of things; consumers, all of us who buy these copyrighted materials; and finally the third group, the artists. There are a great many artists who are ultimately the producers of the works that we buy.

We heard from a large number of these people, and from other groups in the education field, as well as librarians, photographers and a great many people who have an interest in modernizing the copyright law.

When we finally saw Bill C-11 as it was presented just recently, we discovered, as I said, that there had been no changes whatsoever to it, yet there were some very compelling testimonies presented by the witnesses who appeared earlier this year. Personally I would have thought, and I had hoped, that the version we would be dealing with today would have had some changes put into it.



In relation to many areas that needed to be modernized under copyright, I would say this is a good bill, and the Liberal Party is ready to support those aspects. However, there are also a number of areas on which we feel the points brought up by witnesses were valid. We feel there should have been consideration given to changing it to make it a more balanced copyright bill. Unfortunately, that did not happen.

I have to say that the thought went through my mind as to whether there had been any intention to listen to any of the witnesses who had appeared. So far, on face value, I would have to say no, because nothing has actually changed between Bill C-32 and Bill C-11.

Although we will be going to committee with Bill C-11, my question is this: are we going to end up with exactly the same bill at the end of that process, or is the government really willing to actually listen to some of the inputs? That is my concern.

This morning the heritage minister said that they did not change anything in Bill C-32 when they made it Bill C-11 out of respect for all those witnesses.

Now, there are two ways to take that, and I am not quite sure what he meant. One possibility is that the Conservatives have stored up the witnesses' input and at the end of the process will make changes. The other is that they are really telling us that we will go through this charade for whatever amount of time Bill C-11 will be debated in committee and otherwise, but will end up with exactly the same bill that was presented a while ago. We therefore introduced an amendment this morning.

As I have said, there are a lot of good things in Bill C-11 that we fully support. For example, I come from a riding where there is a major video game presence. It is a large industry. Canada is a leader in this area, and I support the desire and the need to protect against piracy. That is very important for Canada. That is an example of something we support entirely.

We also have no problem with certain other things, such as some of the fair dealing provisions that would deal with parody and satire.

However, there are other areas where valid points have been brought up. The first one, of course, has to do with digital locks.

● (1820)

Our point of view in the Liberal Party is that if people buy a copyrighted product such as a piece of music, a video, or an electronic book, download it and pay for it legitimately, then they have bought the right to that product. If they choose to transfer it to another device, again for their personal enjoyment and for a non-infringing personal purpose, then we do not believe they should be forbidden from doing that, even if it has a digital lock on it. That is fundamental in our position. It is because those people have paid for the product, and it remains a product that they want to use for personal purposes.

The argument presented by the minister of heritage is that if it has a lock on it and the buyers intend to transfer it, they have a choice of either breaking the law or not buying the product. We do not think that is the way we should approach this particular issue of digital locks, nor do the majority of Canadians.

### *Points of Order*

The second thing has to do with fair dealing and the definition of fair dealing. As members know, "fair dealing" is defined under a number of criteria in the Berne Convention. The particular issue that was probably the most contentious was bringing education under fair dealing. When that happened, we in the Liberal Party and a lot of the witnesses asked for a definition of "education" under "fair dealing". In fact, we proposed, constructively, to codify a number of criteria established by the Supreme Court that would establish whether fair dealing had been infringed because, as members know, if people feel that fair dealing has been infringed, the onus is on them to get themselves a lawyer and say that there was an infringement of the fair dealing with respect to the use of their copyrighted material.

A number of criteria were proposed by the Supreme Court. We believe these are good criteria and that they should be codified. We made that suggestion during the hearings for Bill C-32; a lot of the suggestions were listened to and a lot of people mentioned this same idea, yet we do not find it in Bill C-11. That is something else we find very preoccupying.

Finally, there is the issue of transitional funding to help artists, particularly if we look at an example like the music industry. In relation to this industry, we recognized a number of years ago that artists should be compensated when their music is copied. As members know, we established a levy on CDs and cassettes, and for a while this gave a very good compensation. It got up to about \$28 million annually. An organization responsible for sharing that money out among artists did so, and that was accepted by the artists.

Of course, CDs and tapes are not used very much today for recording musical works, so we suggested that an alternative should be put in place, and we still believe it is important to address the requirement for fair compensation for artists who produce works and whose works are copied to other media.

That is the why we proposed this reasoned amendment today. We hope that the Conservative government, as it listens to the debate here and as it goes to committee, is sincere in paying attention to what witnesses say and to all the written submissions.

● (1825)

[Translation]

**Mr. Alain Giguère (Marc-Aurèle-Fortin, NDP):** Madam Speaker, my question is for the distinguished hon. member for Westmount—Ville-Marie, who seems to find some positive aspects in this bill. However, if he thinks they are positive, how does he explain that this copyright bill is being unanimously rejected by creators and is not getting any support from arts groups and organizations? How can we interpret this move by the government, which claims to be a true defender of culture? How can you claim to defend culture when every creative artist rejects this legislation?

**Mr. Marc Garneau:** Madam Speaker, I want to thank the hon. member for the question.

*Government Orders*

Indeed, among the key people affected by this issue, it is true that creators are getting the short end of the stick. I agree. We in the Liberal Party have worked on that. We have even proposed creating a fund to ensure that our musical artists are adequately compensated for works that are copied. We have shown through this example that we were prepared to make special efforts and create a special fund to compensate our artists. We met with them. We proposed changes. I think the approach we took with the artists was constructive and tried to recognize that they are getting shortchanged in this bill as it is currently worded.

[English]

**Mr. Mike Lake (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Industry, CPC):** Madam Speaker, I listened with interest as the hon. member talked about amendments that the Liberals had moved to the bill. The Liberals did not actually move any amendments, plural; they moved one amendment to the bill, and that amendment basically wipes out the bill. It is an amendment to wipe out the bill.

Of course, we have 12 years invested in this bill, as I mentioned earlier to his colleague on a question. We have seen four different versions of it. As was explained earlier today, we moved the same version that we had spent a lot of time on as colleagues. We spent time on the same committee last time discussing this bill. We heard the same testimony from literally dozens and dozens of witnesses in over 39 hours of committee testimony.

I do not really have a question. It is more of a comment. If we are actually going to be able to move forward, if we are actually going to respect the process and the dozens of witnesses who came forward to say how important it is for us to pass legislation, perhaps we can work more co-operatively than just moving an amendment to wipe out all the work—

**The Deputy Speaker:** I must interrupt the hon. member. We must stop at 6:30. We will give the hon. member a chance to respond.

The hon. member for Westmount—Ville-Marie, for one minute.

**Mr. Marc Garneau:** Madam Speaker, first of all I hope that my hon. colleague is going to take a hint. What we are trying to suggest here is that there are some changes required.

A minute ago and earlier today I listened to him talk about how we have listened to so many people and have received so many witnesses and so many written submissions, but what do we see in Bill C-11? Can he tell me that everything that has been suggested under the Bill C-32 legislative committee is actually being considered for the final version, or did we do a tape erase and start from zero? Are we going to go through a sham exercise that will not change a darned thing?

If he wants to talk about listening to Canadians, he has not done that yet.

• (1830)

**The Deputy Speaker:** Pursuant to order made on Monday, October 17, 2011 the House shall now resolve itself into committee of the whole to consider Motion No. 6 under Government Business.

[Translation]

I do now leave the chair for the House to go into committee of the whole.

**GOVERNMENT ORDERS**

[Translation]

**DEMOCRACY IN UKRAINE**

(House in committee of the whole on Government Business No. 6, Ms. Denise Savoie in the chair.)

**The Chair:** I would like to begin this evening's debate by making a short statement on how the proceedings will unfold.

[English]

Tonight's debate is being held under Standing Order 53.1. It provides for a take note debate to be held following a motion proposed by a minister, leaders of the other parties.

The motion providing for tonight's debate was adopted by the House on Monday, October 17, 2011.

[Translation]

Each member speaking will be allotted 10 minutes for debate, followed by 10 minutes for questions and comments. The debate will end after four hours or when no member rises to speak.

Pursuant to the special order adopted earlier today, the Chair will receive no dilatory motions, no quorum calls, and no requests for unanimous consent.

[English]

Pursuant to the rules used in the committee of the whole, members are permitted to speak more than once provided that there is sufficient time.

At the conclusion of tonight's debate we will rise and the House will adjourn until tomorrow.

We will now begin tonight's take note debate.

[Translation]

**Hon. Peter Van Loan (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, CPC)** moved:

That this Committee take note of concerns regarding the ongoing erosion of democracy in Ukraine, including most recently the politically motivated and arbitrary prosecution and conviction of former prime minister Yulia Tymoshenko by Ukrainian authorities.

[English]

**Mr. Ted Opatz (Etobicoke Centre, CPC):** Madam Chair, I will be sharing my time with the member for Dauphin—Swan River—Marquette.

It is worrisome to observe the recent developments in Ukraine and the ominous signs that democratic development is regressing and being undermined by the apparently politically motivated use of the judicial system in Ukraine.

Many Canadian members of Parliament, including the six members of Ukrainian heritage on this side of the House, along with political leaders from leading democracies around the world, have questioned the conduct of the Tymoshenko trial and subsequently the health of democracy, transparency, the rule of law and most certainly justice in Ukraine.



Tymoshenko is being accused of abusing her authority as prime minister during the signing of gas agreements with Russia in January 2009. The prosecution claims that this caused significant damage to Ukraine in the loss of millions of dollars. For this she has been sentenced to seven years' imprisonment and fined approximately \$200 million. This is an apparent manipulation of justice designed to prevent her from seeking political office in three years' time.

The prosecution claims that she was able to achieve lower prices in negotiations with the Russian state gas company because she was guided by private interests. It is worth noting that the negotiations took place during a gas dispute between Ukraine and Russia wherein shipments of gas to Ukraine and western Europe had been halted.

The conduct of Tymoshenko's trial did not reflect internationally accepted norms of due process or fairness. Even though the hearings were originally transparent and open to the public, latter stages of the trial were conducted behind closed doors.

Furthermore, the court's treatment of Tymoshenko's defence team is highly suspect. Despite numerous petitions for the court to uphold the Ukrainian criminal procedure code for ample time for her lawyers to review case files, the judge ruled that three days was sufficient for the defence team to read and process 5,000 pages of evidence. That is 20 inch pile of paper. It is clear that any legal team would find it impossible to put together an adequate defence with such insufficient time to prepare.

Adding to my skepticism over the conduct of this trial is that Yulia Tymoshenko was charged by the security service of Ukraine with another criminal offence one day after her sentencing last October 11. It is alleged she embezzled \$405 million while president of United Energy Systems of Ukraine in the 1990s. This leads me to believe that the Ukrainian court system is applying selective justice and apparently allowing political interests to interfere with judicial impartiality and due process.

There is no doubt in my mind that Tymoshenko's conviction and pending charges are aimed at silencing an effective opposition leader, a necessary requirement for a healthy democracy. That is why I am speaking out today. This case is much greater than the fate of one Ukrainian leader. It goes directly to the issue of whether the Ukrainian government respects basic human rights and its responsibility to provide fairness and due process under its laws.

Viktor Yanukovich has made it clear that the cries of democratic nations for Yulia Tymoshenko will not lead to her liberation. He insists that the rule of law is supreme and an independent judiciary exists. Ukrainian authorities have to realize that their actions hold consequences for Ukraine's international reputation and its relationship with Canada.

Canada, and especially its Ukrainian Canadian community, is seriously concerned about democratic regression. The Ukrainian community in Etobicoke Centre has expressed its outrage to me. I have stood with members of the community and protested at the Ukrainian Consulate in Etobicoke and I spoke out about this apparent application of judicial vindictiveness. These concerns are shared with the Canadian Prime Minister who, in his letter to Ukraine's president, warned that bilateral relations, now dominated by free trade talks, could be damaged by these recent events.

### *Government Orders*

In his address to the Ukrainian Canadian Congress just last week, the Prime Minister was very clear on Canada's position on Ukraine, a position I wholeheartedly support. He said:

Canada will support Ukraine whenever it moves towards freedom, democracy and justice.

Along with all of my constituents, I truly hope Ukraine does the right thing and upholds democratic freedom and the rule of law, ensuring a long lasting and productive relationship with Canada and all democratic nations that are now decrying this situation.

I stand with not only my constituents of Ukrainian heritage but all Canadians of Ukrainian heritage to denounce this apparently shameful course of action President Yanukovich has embarked upon.

*[Member spoke in Ukrainian]*

• (1835)

*[Translation]*

**Ms. Hélène Laverdière (Laurier-Sainte-Marie, NDP):** Madam Chair, I would like to thank my colleague for his eloquent presentation. Could he speak a bit more about diplomatic measures that Canada could take to resolve the situation and exert pressure on Ukraine?

*[English]*

**Mr. Ted Opitz:** Madam Chair, Canada is doing everything it possibly can right now.

The Minister of Foreign Affairs has issued strong statements in his own communiqués to the President of Ukraine, as has the Prime Minister, especially last Friday when he received the Shevchenko medal at the Ukrainian Canadian Congress event.

The Prime Minister sent a letter to President Yanukovich stating that he is jeopardizing relations with Canada.

Free trade negotiations are ongoing and our relations will be in jeopardy if actions and democratic regression continue.

**Mr. Robert Sopuck (Dauphin—Swan River—Marquette, CPC):** Madam Chair, Canada has a strong history with Ukraine. This year we celebrated 120 years of Ukrainian settlement in Canada. To date there are about 1.3 million Ukrainian Canadians in this country.

In 1991, Canada was the first country to recognize Ukrainian independence. The government has such a strong focus in terms of its dealings with the Ukrainian community that on October 14 the Prime Minister received the Shevchenko medal from the Ukrainian Canadian Congress.

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One activity the government has undertaken to cause it to earn this great award is the passing of the Ukrainian Famine and Genocide Memorial Day Act in 2008. I thank my colleague from Selkirk—Interlake for his great work on that. Another is our government's support for democratic reforms in Ukraine. We sent over 200 election observers to Ukraine for the 2010 presidential election. We are also entering into historic free trade agreements.

It is because of this relationship that the case of Yulia Tymoshenko is so troublesome for all members in the House. She is an extraordinary person. Before she became the first female prime minister of Ukraine she co-led the Orange Revolution. That was a time of unprecedented hope and progress in Ukraine where the world thought freedom, democracy and the rule of law would prevail. It is a country with magnificent potential. It has a strongly educated workforce, terrific farmland resources and abundant natural resources. The country seemed to be on the verge of greatness.

However, in May of this year Yulia Tymoshenko was subjected to a trial on a trumped up charge and sentenced to seven years' imprisonment. Officials in the United States and the European Union called the prosecution of Tymoshenko "selective prosecution of political opponents".

Our own Minister of Foreign Affairs in May of this year stated:

Canada is troubled by the manner in which the arrest, prosecution and conviction of Yulia Tymoshenko were carried out by Ukrainian authorities.

Interestingly, because of the seven-year sentence she received she is obviously precluded from running in the 2012 and 2015 elections. Yulia Tymoshenko is a very popular person in Ukraine but her very popularity appears to be her undoing in terms of dealing with the current Ukrainian judiciary.

There has been an international protest and what is now occurring in the House of Commons exemplifies the concern that the international community has. I have been informed that there are a number of demonstrations occurring in Ukraine itself where the citizens are protesting against this travesty of justice.

In a speech given by our Prime Minister on October 14 at the award ceremony hosted by the Ukrainian Canadian Congress, in terms of his letter to President Yanukovich, he said:

I let him know that I am deeply concerned...

That the conduct of Tymoshenko's trial does not reflect accepted norms of due process or fairness.

[...]

Canada will support Ukraine whenever it moves towards...democracy and justice.

However, our foreign policy is rooted in principle, and in the defence of freedom.

I am proud to be part of a government that exemplifies such principled foreign policy at home and abroad. We will always stand on principle. We will always uphold the rule of law. We will always defend Canadian values here and around the world. We are a valued and trusted friend of Ukraine and many of our other allies. We will always stand up for freedom and democracy.

The Prime Minister also said in his speech to the Ukrainian Canadian Congress on October 14:

The Ukrainian people can count on Canada to stand-up for their liberty.

It is time for the Ukrainian justice system to be fair to Yulia Tymoshenko.

• (1840)

**Ms. Peggy Nash (Parkdale—High Park, NDP):** Madam Chair, many Ukrainian Canadians are asking themselves what they can do here in Canada regarding the situation in Ukraine. I have had the privilege of participating in public demonstrations with the community a couple of times regarding the serious situation in Ukraine.

My question is with regard to Canada's trading relationship with Ukraine. Isolating Ukraine would be the wrong way to go. Does my colleague think we should encourage Ukraine to respect its own judiciary and democracy by telling it that respecting human rights is extremely important if it wants a free trade agreement with Canada?

• (1845)

**Mr. Robert Sopuck:** Madam Chair, my hon. friend has asked an excellent question. A thriving trading relationship is probably the best way to promote democracy and human rights. Canada will, and should, express outrage at what has been happening in Ukraine, but at the same time Canada should help move Ukraine toward a stronger and better relationship with the western world. It has to be a two-pronged approach where we express our concern for what is happening to Yulia Tymoshenko and at the same time increase our trading relationship with Ukraine.

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.):** Madam Chair, I appreciate the member's comments. It is a very important debate we are having this evening. I will put forward a thought and will be interested in hearing the member's response to it.

Given Canada's history in terms of wanting to help resolve issues in Ukraine, would the member be in favour of having representatives from all parties of this House make representation on an issue such as this? We would get one or two members from each political party in the House to show how serious we are on this particular issue. Is this something which he thinks the government might be open to do?

**Mr. Robert Sopuck:** Madam Chair, a few months ago I had the honour to be elected chair of the Canada-Ukraine Parliamentary Friendship Group, an all-party group dedicated to improving relations with Ukraine. Personally, I would have no difficulty with the suggestion that he had.

This is one of those issues that transcends partisanship. I know that all of us strive to get our place in the sun as political parties and MPs, but there are issues which I think transcend partisanship, and this may be one of them. I think that is something we could consider through the Canada-Ukraine Parliamentary Friendship Group.

**Mr. Bob Dechert (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, CPC):** Madam Chair, I would like to congratulate my colleague on being elected as chair of the Canada-Ukraine Parliamentary Friendship Group. He does very fine work in that regard.



The member was in attendance last Friday evening in Toronto when the Prime Minister received the Shevchenko award from the Ukrainian Canadian Congress. I understand that the Prime Minister is only the second prime minister in Canadian history to have been awarded that medal. The first was prime minister John Diefenbaker. Could the member share with us some of the comments the Prime Minister made last Friday night on that occasion about this matter that we are discussing this evening?

**Mr. Robert Sopuck:** Madam Chair, the Prime Minister was very forthright and principled in his comments. There was no equivocation, no hesitation at all. Canada is clearly on the side of the Ukrainian people.

I have a comment about the Taras Shevchenko medal. Taras Shevchenko is the heart and soul of Ukrainian culture. Indeed, in my own little community of Sandy Lake we have a Ukrainian museum and there are the poems of Taras Shevchenko. The common thread of freedom, democracy and the rule of law permeate Ukrainian culture from the littlest communities to the largest cities, and our Prime Minister's remarks reflected that.

**Ms. Hélène Laverdière (Laurier-Sainte-Marie, NDP):** Madam Chair, the NDP strongly supports this motion. The NDP is really concerned about the politically motivated persecution of Ukrainian opposition members and, in particular, the former prime minister, Mrs. Tymoshenko.

We in this room are not the only ones to be concerned about the current situation, nor are we the only ones to say that this trial was politically motivated. Amnesty International, which is a very trusted organization, said:

The prosecution against Yuliya Timoshenko is politically motivated. The charges against her are not internationally recognizable offences, they are attempts to criminalize decisions that she made in the course of her work.... Poor political decisions of this kind – if that is what they were – should be punished by voters, not through courts.

We fully agree. In fact, we have been concerned for some time about the situation. In September the NDP finance critic and the foreign affairs critic sent a letter to the Minister of Foreign Affairs to underline our concerns on that issue. We are quite happy for this opportunity to discuss this very serious issue today.

As we all know, democracy is far more than casting a vote every four, five or seven years, depending on the regime. Democracy includes fundamental respect for institutions. In this case we can see a clear disrespect for normal institutions and the division of power. The persecution of Mrs. Tymoshenko is a politicization of the judicial system, not only her persecution but the persecution of other opposition leaders. It should be a wake-up call for all of us that our institutions can be so fragile and have to be protected seriously.

Democracy also includes respect for political rights. Here again we see a clear violation of those rights. As well, democracy includes respect for diverging views, such as in the media. More and more in Ukraine there is a shutdown of media that show different versions of things, and of course, opposition parties. Democracy is that and a lot more.

I started by saying that democracy is not only about voting, but democracy is also about the right to vote. There are serious concerns about the October 2012 election in Ukraine. How is this election

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going to proceed if the main opposition leaders cannot participate in the said election? What kind of democratic election can that be?

We are all here today because we deplore this situation, but we are not the only ones. The EU has condemned the situation, as have the Americans. However, we should do more than deplore and protest.

● (1850)

We Canadians have such strong links with Ukrainian people. Their brothers among us have helped build this country. We have more than 120 years of a strong relationship, so we do care about what is happening in Ukraine. We do not want Ukrainians to lose all the benefits of the Orange Revolution. We do not want violence to erupt in Ukraine. This could happen; repression moves quickly. We want a democratic and prosperous Ukraine.

We should do more than stand here worrying and saying this is not good. We should communicate our concerns to Ukrainian officials. We should discuss with partners in the EU and our neighbours to the south to see what avenues there are to convince current Ukrainian authorities that they are going down the wrong path. We should also help in Ukraine. We should support, for example, human rights groups. We should support a training formula. We should support pro-democracy organizations.

We already give \$22 million a year to Ukraine. I am not saying we should stop giving this money, far from it, but we give it mainly in the business and agricultural sectors which are very important. If the situation gets worse, those sectors are going to suffer too. Maybe we should do a bit more on prevention. Maybe we should work more upstream and put all our efforts and money toward ensuring a healthy Ukrainian democracy where human rights are respected, where there is a clear division of power and where the prime minister does not hold all the power over parliament, government and everything else.

This is something we should clearly think about. We should think about redirecting our aid money to support on the ground human rights organizations and pro-democracy organizations. We should be looking very closely at the proposed Canada-Ukraine free trade agreement to see if we should move forward in the current circumstances and if so, if we can include in the agreement some safeguards and guarantees regarding human rights and the rule of law.

● (1855)

**Mr. Bob Dechert (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, CPC):** Madam Chair, I want to congratulate my hon. colleague on her speech and on her selection as the foreign affairs critic for the NDP.

*Government Orders*

The member will know that the Prime Minister made a statement about the Tymoshenko matter just last Friday when, as was mentioned earlier, he had the honour of receiving the Taras Shevchenko medal from the Ukrainian Canadian Congress, the highest honour that organization bestows. As was pointed out earlier, he is only the second prime minister in Canadian history to receive that medal. He said:

I've written directly to President Yanukovich. I let him know that I am deeply concerned...that the conduct of Tymoshenko's trial does not reflect accepted norms of due process or fairness. Friends, we all know that vigorous political opposition and judicial independence are vital to building a democratic and prosperous Ukraine. Canada will support Ukraine whenever it moves towards freedom, democracy and justice. However, our foreign policy is rooted in principle, and in the defence of freedom.

I wonder if the hon. member could comment on the Prime Minister's remarks.

● (1900)

[Translation]

**Ms. Hélène Laverdière:** Madam Chair, I believe that his comments were quite pertinent. We thank him for that. His comments reveal a great deal about Canadian diplomacy, defending democracy and human rights, which has been an exceptional and longstanding tradition recognized throughout the world, and a source of pride.

As part of the response, such a gesture is absolutely essential. I also suggest that we could do more by examining the type of aid that we give Ukraine and by providing concrete assistance on the ground to developing democratic institutions and human rights organizations.

It is fine to say that we support democracy, but we must do our part. With Canada's expertise in democracy, human rights and democratic institutions, and given our longstanding friendship with Ukraine, we should be first in line to provide our support.

[English]

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.):** Madam Chair, I want to pick up on the member's point about getting directly involved. I had made the suggestion to a previous speaker that one of the things we could consider looking at is the possibility of having an all party group of members of Parliament go and deliver a message based on consensus.

I would be interested in hearing the member's response to that particular idea.

**Ms. Hélène Laverdière:** Madam Chair, I thank the member opposite for his suggestion, which seems to be an interesting one.

When we are dealing with such complicated issues, it needs to be a multi-prong approach. I think parliamentarians can play an important role, especially given that one of the problems in Ukraine is the lack of independence of the parliament in the current situation. This could be very important and I am sure some people from the NDP caucus would be interested in participating in that.

I think we also need to bring to bear governmental pressure and the on-the-ground expertise that Canada has on these issues.

**Ms. Linda Duncan (Edmonton—Strathcona, NDP):** Madam Chair, I thank my hon. colleague for her very informed and helpful

comments. In the House, we all respect her long history in the diplomatic services. Her opinion is very valued on this.

It is interesting that the very recommendations being made in the House and by my hon. colleague are endorsed by the Ukrainian Canadian Congress. It has called for CIDA to divert its funding and its support toward more NGO support to build better governments, and so forth.

I appreciated my hon. colleague's comment that while we do not want to discourage trade between Canada and the Ukraine, we want to build their economy. I come from a province where the former premier was of Ukrainian descent. We come from a very proud tradition.

I have a history with some of the side agreements to trade agreements, for example the NAFTA agreement in which conditions were imposed giving citizens the right to participate, access information and so forth. Apparently, the Ukrainian Canadian Congress has called for censuring the Ukraine government. If we look at the definition of censure, I wonder if perhaps those are some of the measures that we could pursue. Maybe there needs to be conditions on transparency, engagement and so forth in our trade agreements.

● (1905)

[Translation]

**Ms. Hélène Laverdière:** Absolutely, Madam Chair, and the tools already exist. This is not the first time that a country is in a situation where it is signing agreements with another country that still has progress to make. The European Union is a good example. It accepts into the union countries that still do not meet its standards, but it gives them benchmarks to reach. I think that is a policy that we should integrate into all of our free trade agreements. As my colleague said, it is not a matter of abandoning Ukraine. In such situations, it is important to maintain a dialogue and work together, and for Canada to bring what it can to the table.

If I may digress: in all of our free trade agreements, when necessary, we must have specific measures to ensure that human rights and democratic development are essential parts of the free trade agreement. That is true not only for Ukraine but also for Colombia and many other countries. We cannot do trade only without taking into account issues as important as human rights. If it is not a matter of being kind, it is a matter of being smart. Countries that do not respect human rights are often more unstable countries, and no one wins.

[English]

**Mr. Peter Goldring (Edmonton East, CPC):** Madam Chair, I congratulate my colleague on her dissertation on the matter at present. I just have one suggestion to possibly throw into the mix.



The Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe has delegates from Canada, the United States and 54 other countries, including the Ukraine. It is an excellent forum to have these discussions with parliamentarians from 56 countries. Perhaps it is in a forum, not necessarily to single out but maybe to be inclusive, that we should have a discussion on parliamentary democracy. It might inch into this type of discussion on how to deal with matters, how to make the point and have a decision-making process with 56 countries of parliamentarians on a better way for parliaments to proceed with their own internal democracy.

[Translation]

**Ms. Hélène Laverdière:** Madam Chair, I thank my hon. colleague for his speech, which is in line with my comments. If we want to ask the OSCE to be a partner in the talks with Ukraine, we can do it at the parliamentary level, but we can also do it with the organization itself. It has a great deal of expertise in democratic development and the protection of human rights.

[English]

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.):** Madam Chair, I am disappointed over recent events in relation to the prosecution of former Ukrainian prime minister and opposition leader, Yulia Tymoshenko. Recently, a judiciary in Ukraine found that Ms. Tymoshenko had overstepped her authority as former prime minister in a 2009 gas deal with Russia. The government of the current prime minister, Viktor Yanukovich, has alleged that the agreement forces Ukraine to pay exorbitant prices well above market value for Russian gas. As a result, Ms. Tymoshenko has now been sentenced to seven years in prison and has been barred from holding governmental posts for an additional three years after the completion of her prison sentence.

Others have also been targeted. Recently, charges have been brought forth against former interior minister, Yuri Lutsenko.

I think it is clear, from these recent charges against the opposition in Ukraine, that the government is engaging in political silencing, especially in light of upcoming elections both next year and in 2015. As a result of her sentence, Ms. Tymoshenko will not be permitted to run in either election.

I take issue with these political trials that ultimately put at risk the ability of Ukraine to have free democratic elections. We must ask how Ukraine can uphold the rights and visions of its people when dissenting voices are threatened and effectively removed by the hands of the courts and through what appears here to be the influence of the government. Governments cannot prosecute the decisions of former governments simply because they do not agree with them, and governments must respect and safeguard the right of individuals to express their positions.

Dissension is not criminal. Rather, it is an integral part of the maintenance of a strong, dynamic and democratic society. Amnesty International has repeatedly called for the release of Ms. Tymoshenko and various international experts have questioned the legitimacy of the trial.

I urge the government to take measures so that the rights of Ukrainians are upheld and so that individuals and authority figures have the ability to speak freely of their positions without fear of prosecution. Ukraine needs to facilitate a fair and transparent appeal

process for Ms. Tymoshenko and to ensure that the judiciary maintains its independence.

It is a privilege for me to stand here today and speak to this very important take note debate. I find that Canada has a wonderful history in terms of friendship with Ukraine and the connections we have been able to develop over the years speak volumes. As has been pointed out, back in 1991, Ottawa was quick to recognize an independent Ukraine. On May 27, 2008, all four parties here in the House of Commons voted on a bill recognizing the Holodomor as an act of genocide.

Even though I was not in this particular House, I was in the Manitoba legislature. In the last number of years, the Manitoba legislature has had resolutions and bills dealing with the recognition of the Holodomor as an act of genocide. We recognize the valuable contributions our Ukrainian community has made to who we are as a Canadian society. In fact, one of the first issues I raised inside the House of Commons was an issue that I know is very important to our Ukraine community, and that was in regard to the Holodomor and the Canadian Human Rights Museum, and why it is that I believe, suspect and hope that others in the House see the value of having that permanent display.

I say that because we do have a role to play. We have a history where we have shown that Canada can have an impact. We have that rich heritage here. I could talk about Winnipeg North as a community that was, in good part, built by Ukrainian immigrants. They have not lost their caring or compassion for their homeland, which is something I personally encourage. We need to take advantage of the rich heritages that are brought from other countries. Ukraine is one of them and the Ukrainian community has made immense contributions to our country.

● (1910)

People can turn to organizations such as the Ukrainian Canadian Congress that have immense amounts of credibility to get a sense of what is actually happening. Organizations like that can help us in ensuring we are making good decisions on where to go from here.

I and the Liberal caucus have benefited immensely from the past performance of Borys Wrzesnewskyj, the former member of Parliament for Etobicoke Centre, and he also was a friend. Even though I have not known him long, he was a colleague of mine, and he ensures that the Liberal caucus is being kept informed on this very important issue.

That is one of the reasons I made the suggestion a little earlier that there is something else we should consider doing. I was pleased that the member for Dauphin—Swan River—Marquette mentioned the possibility of three or five members going to Ukraine to look at what we might be able to do in an all-party fashion, including the Canada-Ukraine Parliamentary Friendship Group, of which I am a member. I look to the member and suggest this is something that could make a difference. Maybe it is possible to visit Mrs. Tymoshenko herself or other individuals in Ukraine, as a group of parliamentarians.

### *Government Orders*

It is really encouraging when party politics are put aside in order to address an important issue. This is an important issue that is worthy of the debate taking place this evening, and I hope and trust that members will want to take it to the next level. It is encouraging when we hear that letters have been written, whether they are from the Prime Minister or others, or when individual actions are taken within our many communities, even by individuals not of Ukrainian heritage who know what is right and wrong, see what is happening in Ukraine and feel it is just not right. It shows just how vulnerable democracy is and how important it is for us as parliamentarians to play a role in protecting democracies where we can, especially where we can have that influence.

I would suggest the time is right for us to be debating this issue today. I hope a strong message will go to Ukraine about the debate we are having. I look forward to a response from the member for Dauphin—Swan River—Marquette, chair of the Canada-Ukraine Parliamentary Friendship Group, with the hope that we will be able to move forward on the issue. Perhaps we could meet and have a discussion as to what is next. We could possibly invite the Ukrainian Canadian Congress to participate in our next meeting so we can continue the dialogue in an apolitical fashion and hopefully have a stronger impact in Ukraine. I trust, hope and pray we are able to make a difference in the beautiful country of Ukraine.

• (1915)

**Mr. Peter Goldring (Edmonton East, CPC):** Madam Chair, just as a little background for those who may not be aware, Yulia Tymoshenko was the lightning rod in the Orange Revolution. She really was one of the premier people who caused the Orange Revolution, kept it going, and brought it to a successful, wonderful conclusion. What a message to the world to have hundreds of thousands of people out on the street in protest for their vote and to have no one injured in it. It was a peaceful protest that was successfully brought through.

She was a thorn in the side of the president back then, and in the last presidential election as well. It is rather understandable, in a way, why she would be perceived to be problematic for the president moving forward, as my colleague said.

Does my colleague have other ideas for things we might do to put this issue forward on an international platter? Would it be appropriate to call in the ambassador of Ukraine when he does arrive here, or for our friendship committee to have a friendly meeting with the ambassador of Ukraine when he does arrive? What other things could my colleague possibly offer for consideration?

• (1920)

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux:** Madam Chair, I think that is an excellent idea. I have two quick points. The Orange Revolution is something that is really unique in world history, and we acknowledge that. The leading role Ms. Tymoshenko played was just overwhelmingly phenomenal. That is all the more reason why Canada does have a role to play.

I suggest that there is the political will here today, whether it is the Liberal Party of Canada, the New Democrats or the Conservatives in government. Maybe the way we attempt to take it to the next level is to ask the member for Dauphin—Swan River—Marquette, who is the chair of the parliamentary friendship group between Canada and

Ukraine, to convene a meeting and we will get members from all political parties together. I am a member of that particular committee and I would welcome the opportunity to have the ambassador come before the committee. Maybe we can come up with some ideas through that particular committee. I can assure the member that he would have my full co-operation in an apolitical fashion.

**Ms. Linda Duncan (Edmonton—Strathcona, NDP):** Madam Chair, I have to share that I am finding it very encouraging to hear both from the Conservative benches and the Liberal benches the enthusiasm they share with us for the orange wave.

**Hon. Peter Van Loan:** It is different.

**Mr. Peter Goldring:** Stick with the program.

**Ms. Linda Duncan:** No, it is not different. It is a colour that represents freedom, democracy and opportunity to participate in the development of their nation. We applaud the people of Ukraine for standing up and fighting for that. I know Ukrainians share that with Canadians. They want the opportunity for economic development. They want the freedom of association. They want democratic institutions.

There is a wonderful institution that comes out of Alberta, the *Ukrainian News*, which has been there for many decades. It has been giving front page coverage to this issue. It is clearly an issue of concern to Canadians and to Albertans, and not just people of Ukrainian decent.

I am wondering if the member agrees with what is reported in the *Ukrainian News*, that the Ukrainian Canadian Congress is saying, yes, we should be using all diplomatic means but we should be censoring the Ukrainian government if it is not including measures for democracy and freedom of speech in its trade relationships with Canada. I wonder if the member could speak to that.

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux:** Madam Chair, again, I have two quick points.

That is one of the reasons I made the suggestion that the Canadian Ukrainian Congress would be a wonderful group to have come and meet with the friendship group, which we already have established and which is quite ably chaired by the member for Dauphin—Swan River—Marquette. There is all-party representation on it. I believe it could be done in a fairly apolitical fashion by doing it that way.

With regard to the reference to orange, I could talk about the yellow revolution that occurred in the Philippines in reaction to President Marcos. I do not want to get into the colours. It is not about colours. Ms. Tymoshenko is an awesome lady and she is quickly becoming a world icon. I think what we need to do is, in an apolitical fashion as much as possible, try to make sure there is justice to this issue and that democracy is protected in Ukraine, as much as we can.

I am prepared to work in an apolitical fashion with someone of Ukrainian heritage back in Winnipeg North or with the Prime Minister, because this is an issue that I think transcends party lines. At least that is my take on it at this point.



*Government Orders*

**Hon. Jim Karygiannis (Scarborough—Agincourt, Lib.):** Madam Chair, I am remembering some of the history of the Orange Revolution and the work that was done then. It was the spirit of the Martin government at the time that sent close to 1,000 observers, under the leadership of former prime minister John Turner. They went there to assist and make sure democracy did happen.

There are 1.2 million Ukrainians in Canada, the fourth largest diaspora in Canada, and they are playing an important role. We have members of Parliament from Ukraine and we even had a Governor General.

We can sit and talk about sanctions, and I was impressed when my colleague across the way said that maybe we should call the ambassador and speak to him. I am wondering if there is a means for ambassadors whose countries are misbehaving in an undemocratic fashion, be they Egypt or Syria, to be called on the carpet and read the riot act. Maybe we should act in the same fashion when the new ambassador comes from Ukraine, and also all the other high commissioners and ambassadors whose countries are doing this kind of thing. Could the member comment on this?

• (1925)

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux:** Madam Chair, I appreciate the comment in regard to the election observers. The number of Canadians who participated in Ukraine in 2004 was impressive to see.

In my short period of time in the Canada-Ukraine Parliamentary Friendship Group, I have noted that there was a relationship between the past ambassador and the group. I do believe there is some merit in terms of asking, but the past ambassador is now back in Ukraine. One of his last responsibilities was to retrace via train the immigration of individuals who came from Ukraine. I met him in the Winnipeg train station. I believe there is merit in at least asking for the ambassador so we can express ourselves in a very direct way.

One of the suggestions we made earlier was having an all-party group of MPs travel to Ukraine, hopefully to meet with Ms. Tymoshenko or others. We hope the government will pick up on that particular recommendation.

**Hon. Peter Van Loan (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, CPC):** Madam Chair, I will be splitting my time with the hon. member for Edmonton East.

It is my pleasure to rise today to speak to this important and timely debate regarding the recent erosion of democracy in Ukraine. I know that I am not alone in being deeply troubled by recent events. If the recent conviction of former Prime Minister Yulia Tymoshenko was not cause enough for concern, the fact that it is just the latest in a series of anti-democratic actions taken by the current Ukrainian administration certainly is.

When I look at these mounting attacks on democracy and human rights, it is difficult not to conclude that the current government is on a course that will suffocate democracy and subvert legitimate opposition in Ukraine.

In 1991 Canada was able to support Ukrainian freedom in a dramatic and concrete way. Under the leadership of Prime Minister Brian Mulroney, we were the first western country to recognize Ukrainian independence and freedom. We did so on December 2, just one day after the Ukraine had itself affirmed its independence.

Since then, Canada has worked closely at the governmental level and informally through community and citizen organizations to help Ukraine rebuild after 70 long years of Soviet socialist tyranny. This has been no easy task.

Ukrainians have demonstrated time and again their courage and determination to turn their back on their communist past and to be part of the western spirit of democracy and freedom in which human rights are respected and the rule of law prevails. For that reason, the recent developments in Ukraine are that much more distressing.

There is a bitter irony in these recent developments, for the current president and his administration were brought to power in 2010 in what were agreed at the time to be mostly free and fair elections. However, only six years after the Orange Revolution which saw Ukrainian people rise up in the face of political corruption demanding the right to have their say in who governs and how, only six years after these momentous events which gave Ukrainians, indeed, people around the world such hope, their hopes are being dashed by an administration that appears to be prepared to subvert justice and the rule of law.

In every international rating of freedom, Ukraine is sliding today. Journalists increasingly practice self-censorship to avoid persecution. Those who do not practice self-censorship may face serious threats to their lives, threats that are often downplayed or ignored by the authorities. One has to ask how free and independent a press can be when one of its largest media magnets also just happens to be head of the Ukraine's security service.

As the Minister of Foreign Affairs for Canada so clearly stated in his recent address to the United Nations General Assembly, Canada is a vigorous defender of freedom, democracy, human rights and the rule of law. Standing for what is principled and just is a Canadian tradition".

This principled approach forms the cornerstone of our country's foreign policy and of our response to the development in Ukraine. Canada has spoken strongly over the past two years as conditions have worsened in Ukraine. In August of this year, the minister publicly expressed the Government of Canada's concern over Ms. Tymoshenko's arrest and the potential negative impact this action would have on democratic development in Ukraine.

In September both the Prime Minister and the Minister of Foreign Affairs wrote to President Yanukovich, expressing the government's deep concerns about recent developments, in particular the apparent political motivation behind the trial of former Prime Minister Tymoshenko. There are clear signs that Tymoshenko's case has failed to follow a fair judicial process, like many other such politically motivated charges and trials being brought against former members of the opposition.

This is a glaring example in the Tymoshenko case. The prosecution requested the appearance of 32 witnesses and experts. The prosecution was granted all 32. The defence, on the other hand, asked for 30 witnesses and experts. The defence was only granted two.

### *Government Orders*

A second example is that Ms. Tymoshenko has been charged under article 365 of the criminal code. This article is a remnant from the Soviet socialist penal code covering offences of excess of authority of official powers. This article is being used in a subjective way to criminalize the act of making a political decision, and in this case, reaching an international agreement.

Canada is deeply concerned about the appearance of reaching back to the laws of a Soviet socialist communist occupation that starved its people and executed political opponents. There can be no question that the political motivation and bias in the prosecution of this and other cases, as well as the court proceedings, undermines the neutrality of the court and therefore the strength of the rule of law in Ukraine.

While Ukraine's future is obviously in the hands of the Ukrainian people themselves, Canada cannot stand idly by while the very rights the Ukrainian people so bravely fought for and won are being eroded.

• (1930)

As the Prime Minister recently stated in his address to the Ukrainian Canadian Congress, "Canada will support Ukraine whenever it moves towards freedom, democracy and justice".

Throughout some of the former Soviet Union and Eastern Bloc countries, enormous progress toward free, democratic and open societies has been made. In fact, some of the greatest champions of freedom and individual liberty are now among those countries. From low taxes and high economic freedoms to a commitment to shoulder international obligations to fight for democracy where it is at risk, countries like Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland and more have been at the forefront.

For a time, Ukraine appeared to be following that same path of leadership in the cause of freedom. We know it can return to that path. We urge Ukrainian authorities to do so.

In the meantime the Ukrainian people must know that we will continue to support them and seek ways to work with them to strengthen their democratic institutions and to broaden their opportunities.

**Ms. Linda Duncan (Edmonton—Strathcona, NDP):** Mr. Chair, I appreciate the hon. member's support for Canada speaking out and intervening to see greater democracy in the Ukraine.

The clear definition of democracy is the separation between the judiciary and the legislative and administrative arms.

I wonder if the hon. member could respond to a question I have asked some of the other members. It is reported that the Ukrainian Canadian Congress has called upon the government to make the condition that Congress supports pursuing a trade agreement with Ukraine that will benefit both this country and Ukraine if a good agreement is negotiated and we can maintain good trade into the future. However, it has been asked that this agreement be contingent upon the Ukrainian government committing to respecting democracy and human rights.

Could the member speak to whether his government supports that this be a term of any trade agreement?

• (1935)

**Hon. Peter Van Loan:** Mr. Chair, I am pleased to see some interest in the idea of a trade agreement with Ukraine from the opposition NDP. Traditionally it does not support trade agreements.

When we undertook those trade negotiations, and I was minister of international trade at that time, we consulted broadly in the Ukrainian community. It indicated its strong support for this kind of economic engagement. It believed that a free trade agreement would help further enhance the freedom and the prosperity of the people of the Ukraine, creating greater economic opportunities for them, as well as for the Ukrainian community in Canada, which would be best positioned to take advantage of the trading opportunities in that relationship.

We have continued to consult closely with the Ukrainian community to ensure that they are supportive of the ongoing process of negotiating free trade. We share many of the same concerns they have, hence the communications we have made in terms of our concerns with the erosion of democracy.

Needless to say, progress toward a free trade agreement has not been as rapid under the current regime in Ukraine as we had hoped it would, and as it was previously, but we will continue to move carefully forward in a fashion that will enhance freedom for people in both countries and economic opportunities in both countries.

**Hon. Jim Karygiannis (Scarborough—Agincourt, Lib.):** Mr. Chair, back in the late 1980s, early 1990s, Ukrainian Canadians demonstrated outside the Soviet Union embassy and the consulates general. They were demonstrating because they wanted a free and democratic Ukraine.

Euphoria happened when Ukraine moved into what seemed to be a democracy. There was the Orange Revolution. Now what we have today is the Ukrainian diaspora going back to demonstrate, but not against the Soviet Union embassy and the consulates general, but against their own embassies and consulates general.

I have been told of by my Ukrainian friends that they are seeing the hands of Russia starting to be engaged in Ukraine and play an important role. As they were saying then, "Russia, keep your hands away from Ukraine", they are starting to say right now "Mr. Putin, keep your hands away from Ukraine".

Has there been any conversations on the government side that it might want to send a strong message to Russia to stop meddling in the Ukraine?

**Hon. Peter Van Loan:** Mr. Chair, we have made it clear throughout that, whether it comes to issues like NATO accession or any other issues of international relationships or their standing, no country should have a veto over the choices that the people make to choose freedom. We have said that with regard to NATO accession for Ukraine and for Georgia and indeed we will say that in every forum.



*Government Orders*

The member for Scarborough—Agincourt brings to mind the ages when we used to protest against the Soviet Union for freedom of these captive peoples. I myself come from an Estonian background. I am part of a community that did exactly that. In fact, the reason I am here in the House of Commons today as a Conservative. I remember seeing, as we were fighting for freedom for those captive people, the prime minister of the day, Pierre Trudeau, palling it up with Kosygin and Brezhnev, the Soviet leaders. He did not have that commitment to freedom and human rights that we believed we were fighting for so strongly.

That is why we have to be vigilant that the era of Kosygin, Brezhnev or Stalin or any of those Soviet leaders that kept those people in prison. Crimes against humanity that were not sufficiently condemned by those in the other parties always will be on this side and we will fight for freedom and stand for it four-square. That is why we are proud to be doing what we are doing today for freedom in the Ukraine.

**Mr. Peter Goldring (Edmonton East, CPC):** Mr. Chair, I am pleased to rise this evening to add my voice to those who have expressed their deep concern about recent developments in Ukraine, in particular the apparent political motivation behind the trial and conviction of former prime minister Yulia Tymoshenko.

My deep concern for the unfolding of recent events in Ukraine led me, as a member of the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Development, to recently call for a committee study on the geopolitical realities of Canada-Ukraine relations today. As former chair and executive member and now vice-chair of the Canada-Ukraine Parliamentary Friendship Group, I have expressed concerns at many levels. It is important to raise our deep concerns when we officially can.

For Canadians who have followed Ukraine's development so closely since 1991, these latest developments are deeply troubling. How have things gone so wrong since the heady days of the Orange Revolution, and what can Canadians do to help Ukraine get back on a democratic track?

What happens in Ukraine is of particular interest to Canadians, for our ties with that country are strong: there are 1.2 million Ukrainian Canadians who have helped make Canada the successful, secure and democratic country that it is today.

My wife's family, the Taschuks, came to northern Alberta from Ukraine in the early 1900s. My wife Lorraine, my two daughters, Corinna and Kristina, and my three granddaughters, Katelin, Alexandra and Eleanor, are all of Ukrainian heritage.

Canada was the first western country to recognize Ukrainian independence in 1991. The transition to an open and democratic society after 70 years of Soviet rule, to say nothing of the years of the Tsarist regime before that, has been difficult. Almost from scratch, not just institutions but whole cultures of dialogue and trust have had to be developed, and that development is not yet complete. Ukraine suffers from the weaknesses of civil society, and governance structures remain fragile.

I was in Ukraine as a monitor for the failed election of November 2004 and personally witnessed and photographed massive electoral ballot box stuffing. I stayed on, on my own funding, as the only

Canadian politician to report on the Orange Revolution and was constantly followed and intimidated. I was there to see the end of the discord of the revolution in a burst of fireworks over Independence Square, signalling an agreement, success and hopefulness for the future.

I have returned to Ukraine six times since then, five times as an election monitor and once to take part in the annual parliamentary assembly of the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe, the OSCE, and I witnessed the growing political frustration and discord. While many positive changes did take place, such as increased media and political freedom, many of the population's hopes were not met. Corruption, for example, was not tackled and continued to permeate all levels of government and society.

In the 2010 presidential elections observed by myself for the OSCE and judged to be free and fair, Yanukovych became president, and while democratic development had failed to move forward under the previous president, under Yanukovych's administration it is being forced back.

As we all know, elections in and of themselves are not enough to allow a democracy to grow. A vibrant civil society and active and independent media are essential components of democracy. The current Ukraine administration has been hampering democratic development on all fronts. It has been arresting former members of the opposition, ostensibly on charges of corruption, but those charges consistently change as the judicial process progresses.

An open and democratic society invites thought, innovation, enterprise and investment. A closed society can only feed on itself, and eventually there is nothing left but a hollow shell that can only implode. After 70 years of Soviet rule, Ukrainians know this better than most. We must engage with Ukrainians to support their desires to build a democratic and free society. This cannot mean, however, that we sacrifice our principles for the sake of engagement.

Canada will repeat its criticisms of shortcomings that threaten the building of a peaceful, democratic and prosperous Ukraine. It is through this type of critical engagement that Canada can most effectively support the Ukrainian urge for freedom and democracy.

*Government Orders*

● (1940)

**Ms. Peggy Nash (Parkdale—High Park, NDP):** Mr. Chair, the Ukrainian Canadian Congress has said that given concerns about Ukraine's drift towards authoritarian rule and limitations to freedoms, politically motivated prosecutions, curtailment of academic freedom and freedom of assembly, media censorship and harassment, and politically motivated selective justice, the UCC believes that there is a need to ensure that the Canada-Ukraine free trade agreement includes provisions guaranteeing human rights protection as a precondition to concluding such an agreement.

Does the member opposite agree with that statement?

● (1945)

**Mr. Peter Goldring:** Mr. Chair, there are many scenarios that we could engage in. Perhaps the trade agreements could have wording, but it would be difficult to have those words have full and defined meanings. I don't know; I have not been involved before in trade agreement writing.

However, there are other things we can do. One is to have a meeting of the friendship committee that the member is a part of. The member has been with me on election monitoring in Ukraine. This also, on side visits, engages some of the parliamentarians as well. There are many things that we can do. We are calling this issue forward in the foreign affairs committee as well.

Some of the other suggestions that have come forward are interesting and should be considered as well. I agree totally, as has been said on all sides of the House, that this is a commitment we all have a part of and one on which we come together politically as one in our effort to have this issue heard. If we make this issue roundly, firmly and vocally, I believe there are people there listening. I believe the president is listening.

**Mr. Bob Dechert (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, CPC):** Mr. Chair, I would like to acknowledge the work that my hon. colleague has done over many years to promote the cause of democracy in Ukraine. He is a tribute to all democracy-loving Canadians, and especially those of Ukrainian heritage. The member will know that the Minister of Foreign Affairs has made some important comments on the Tymoshenko matter. I will read one quote. He said on October 11:

Canada is troubled by the manner in which the arrest, prosecution and conviction of Yulia Tymoshenko were carried out by Ukrainian authorities. The apparent political bias and arbitrary prosecution in this and other cases hamper Ukraine's democratic development. A legitimate and active opposition is a vital part of a vibrant and effective democracy.

There are clear signs that the court proceedings fall far short of internationally recognized norms of fairness, transparency and due process.

I wonder if the hon. member could comment on those statements by the Minister of Foreign Affairs.

**Mr. Peter Goldring:** Mr. Chair, it is troubling for all parliamentarians. My understanding of the issue is that she was in office, and whether she has an implied immunity or an actual immunity, for someone who is in a law-making, decision-making process while they are in politics to be subject to criminal charges when they leave politics runs counter to the understanding of parliamentary democracy as we know it.

Who would want to come into a political decision-making role if they were to be subject forever and for all time to someone's reading of a rule from the law books when the laws themselves may be confused? In this case she not only was tried by that law, but convicted by that law and imprisoned by that law. What person would want to follow in those shoes and take up those reins of power under those circumstances?

[Translation]

**Mrs. Anne-Marie Day (Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles, NDP):** Mr. Chair, I would like to thank the hon. member for his speech. Canada plays an important role on the international stage in terms of supporting democracy and human rights. What diplomatic pressure is the Government of Canada putting on Ukraine regarding human rights?

[English]

**Mr. Peter Goldring:** Mr. Chair, Ukraine is a sovereign country, but what we can do, and what we are doing at this very moment, is what I would call strong suggestions of action. This is one method of doing it.

The reporting from this Parliament is already taking place in Ukraine. The reporting for our committee meeting coming up on a study on Ukraine has been in the *Kyiv Post* today, so these different actions are having an effect and they are being heard there. In fact, we are having our voices and our disappointment heard in Kiev.

● (1950)

**Ms. Peggy Nash (Parkdale—High Park, NDP):** Mr. Chair, it is a privilege to be part of this debate this evening on the important topic of current events in Ukraine.

This happens to be the 120th anniversary of Ukrainians in Canada. This year we have been celebrating the incredible legacy of that 120 years of Ukrainian achievements in building our country. We are proud of our special relationship with Ukraine.

My riding of Parkdale—High Park is home to the largest Ukrainian street festival throughout North America. We have a large Ukrainian community. It is home to the Taras H. Shevchenko Museum.

Many of us have been to Ukraine, as my hon. colleague mentioned, as election observers, including in 2004 in what was called the Orange Revolution. We saw the incredible determination and passion of Ukrainians for democracy and human rights. It was inspiring. People camped out for months at the Nezalezhnosti Square in downtown Kiev in Ukraine. They inspired the country in their quest for democracy after tainted elections had occurred. Those of us who had the privilege of being there as election observers saw the genuine desire of the majority of Ukrainians to have free and fair elections. Many people said to us that they just wanted a normal country. They wanted to see the normalization of Ukraine.

While Ukraine is an old and historic country with a long history, it has only 20 years of modern independence. There is real concern that the country is slipping backward.



*Government Orders*

The manner in which the arrest, persecution and conviction of Yulia Tymoshenko was carried out by Ukrainian authorities is deeply troubling. With the sentencing of the former prime minister to seven years in prison, the Ukrainian government under President Yanukovich has reached an alarming new low in the deterioration of democracy and the rule of law in modern Ukraine. The apparent political bias and arbitrary prosecution in this and other cases hamper Ukraine's democratic development. A legitimate and active opposition is a vital part of a vibrant and effective democracy, as we see in the House.

There are clear signs that the court proceedings that occurred fell far short of internationally recognized norms of fairness, transparency and due process. The verdict was the product of a politically motivated trial that did not meet international standards and seemed aimed at silencing a member of the opposition a year before elections.

We believe that a fair and independent judiciary is an essential branch of democratic governance. As vice-chair of the Canada-Ukraine Parliamentary Friendship Group, I join with my colleagues in urging Ukraine to strengthen its judicial independence and capacity.

EU officials have said that they would like to see both Mrs. Tymoshenko and several others, her jailed cabinet ministers, released by Ukrainian authorities before signing a new association agreement with Kiev that marks the first step to membership in the EU. It is hard to see how any agreement with the EU can be signed as long as Kiev rejects a core value of European democracy, namely that elections, not courts, are where politicians settle their differences.

This debate is about far more than the fate of one Ukrainian leader. It really goes directly to the question of whether the Ukrainian government respects basic human rights and its international commitments and whether Ukrainian citizens receive equal treatment under the law.

It is now more important than ever for Canada and our European allies to work together to make clear to the Ukrainian government that the benefits of Euro-Atlantic integration will not be available to Ukraine so long as it violates the values of freedom, political pluralism, and the rule of law that lie at the heart of the Euro-Atlantic community.

● (1955)

We urge the Canadian government to strengthen judicial independence and capacity. These are necessary to the peaceful, democratic and prosperous society Ukraine is striving to become, and Canada will continue to support its efforts in that direction.

Further, the Canadian government must in no uncertain terms communicate its concern to Ukrainian officials, including requesting assurances that Yulia Tymoshenko's constitutional rights will be fully respected.

Canada also has to be clear that negotiations for a Canada-Ukraine free trade agreement cannot be advanced as long as the Ukrainian government refuses to guarantee the protection of human rights, rule of law and democracy in that country. The Ukrainian Canadian Congress is arguing strongly for these provisions to be included.

In closing, as part of our strong relationship, we have a Canada-Ukraine parliamentary program which this year has brought for the 21st time more than 30 talented students to the Canadian Parliament to work with a number of MPs to experience democracy in action. It is our help with Ukraine for democracy building.

These talented interns working with us, one of whom I have in my office, represent the new wave of young and promising citizens of Ukraine. They work hard every day and dream about the better future for their home country. I encourage them and all Ukrainians to do their best and never give up believing in the bright future of Ukraine, and most important, working toward great change in their lives and in the life of their country.

Today we all wish to see a great country and its talented people succeed in overcoming the legacy of its difficult past and continue to build a democratic, stable, prosperous and harmonious society within Ukraine based on respect for national and religious minorities and strong, mutually respectful relations with its neighbours and beyond.

As we say in Parkdale—High Park, *slava Ukraini, slava Canada*.

[Translation]

**Ms. Alexandrine Latendresse (Louis-Saint-Laurent, NDP):** Mr. Chair, I would like to thank the hon. member for her enlightening speech. It was very interesting to hear about the young Ukrainians travelling abroad who are learning what democracy, in the west or elsewhere, can do. Programs were recently set up to encourage as many students and other young Ukrainians as possible to come to Canada to study. It would be wonderful to encourage more of these types of programs that allow youth to come to Canada, to study here and to see what can be had in the west. When they return to Ukraine, they might want to take those ideas back home. Could the hon. member comment on that?

**Ms. Peggy Nash:** Mr. Chair, I thank the hon. member for her question. Canada has very close ties with Ukraine, and we can help Ukrainians in many ways, especially the youth. They have a lot of hope and ideas for the future. They want their country to be better in the future. Exchanges can be a great opportunity for them to see how our democracy and universities work. It is an important investment for Canada, and I continue to encourage our government to make this type of investment. It is a great boost to democracy in Ukraine.

● (2000)

[English]

**Mr. Leon Benoit (Vegreville—Wainwright, CPC):** Mr. Chair, I have an interest in this issue from different points of view, starting with a large Ukrainian population in my constituency. On the farm many of my neighbours and friends were of Ukrainian descent. As well, I am involved with the Canadian NATO Parliamentary Association. In that association we often talk about Ukraine. Canada has been a great supporter of having Georgia and Ukraine come into NATO. I know some members of Parliament from Ukraine very well. When I ask how things are in Ukraine, they refer to the arrest and are very concerned by it.

*Government Orders*

In the long run it is apparent to me that what is holding Ukraine back more than anything else is corruption. It just cannot get through the issue of corruption like some other former Soviet bloc countries have. It is not nearly as successful, and that certainly is holding Ukrainians back.

On the general issue of corruption in Ukraine and how that is holding that society back, how does the member consider that to differ from the issue of the arrest of Mrs. Tymoshenko and the impact this could have on Canada-Ukraine relationships, and also on future development and advancement in Ukraine?

We all are sincerely hoping for the best for Ukraine. It is a country with so many resources and great people. It should be moving ahead faster than it is.

What does the member foresee as a possible impact of this arrest?

**Ms. Peggy Nash:** Mr. Chair, my colleague asked about corruption and the relationship with this latest situation with Mrs. Tymoshenko. It is about trust in democratic institutions. If the average person does not believe there is transparency and that institutions are accountable and working for the population, then people do lose trust. There is a relationship between unhealthy and corrupt institutions and an undermining of people's belief that democracy is possible.

That is why, as my colleague was remarking previously, it is important to have young people come here to study and participate in institutions like Parliament through the internship program. It is important to have exchanges, like several of us as parliamentarians have done, where people go as election observers to see the institutions in Ukraine, and help to strengthen the democratic capacity of Ukraine.

People are very worried. The Ukrainian diaspora around the world and Ukrainians are very worried because once things start to slip backwards, people fear losing all the gains they have made.

[Translation]

**Mr. Alain Giguère (Marc-Aurèle-Fortin, NDP):** Mr. Chair, I want to take this opportunity to thank my colleague from Parkdale—High Park for her very fine presentation.

Currently, through CIDA, Canada is one of the main providers of aid to Ukraine. Insofar as this aid is directly and exclusively based on agriculture, would it not be wise to provide more support that is focused on training activities for legal experts and journalists? At present, it is clearly the lack of independence of the justice system in the face of partisan political power that is the problem.

**Ms. Peggy Nash:** Mr. Chair, I want to thank the hon. member for his question.

Indeed, Canada currently provides a great deal of aid to Ukraine. Perhaps now is the opportunity to change the orientation of this aid and start training journalists and legal experts to help democracy.

A great deal of care is taken in the maintenance and growth of democratic institutions for the future. Canada has a special relationship with Ukraine and I believe that we can provide a great deal of help.

• (2005)

[English]

**Mr. Leon Benoit:** Mr. Chair, I appreciate the member's intervention but I would like to ask her a direct question. We are having this take note debate on this issue. All parties thought it was important. Does the member think this could have a real impact on what is done in Ukraine?

Certainly, Canada has a very strong relationship with Ukraine. That relationship is important to the people of Ukraine. It certainly is important to the people of Ukrainian background in my constituency. I am sure some Canadians are wondering what difference it is going to make. Does the member think this debate could make a difference in the way that Mrs. Tymoshenko is handled and how this proceeds in Ukraine?

**Ms. Peggy Nash:** Mr. Chair, I am convinced that the Ukrainian embassy here in Ottawa is probably taking note of this take note debate. I know that people of Ukrainian origin and people who believe in democracy across the country are watching this debate and appreciating that all parties have come together to express their concern about recent events in Ukraine and that we are united in wanting to foster institutions that will help promote democracy in Ukraine. People want to see concretely what Canada can do to help.

The Ukrainian Canadian Congress has been very clear in terms of actions Canada can take in helping Ukraine to move in the right direction. We want to fully support those recommendations. We know that Canada will continue to play a big role going forward with the situation in Ukraine.

**The Assistant Deputy Chair:** Before we resume debate, I want to point out to those members who have recently joined us that in a take note debate format they are welcome to take any seat in the chamber. Unlike in the normal proceedings of the House of Commons, members can be recognized and speak from whichever seat in the chamber they prefer. Members are welcome to move to a seat that they would like to occupy and they will still be recognized.

Resuming debate. The hon. member for Etobicoke—Lakeshore.

**Mr. Bernard Trotter (Etobicoke—Lakeshore, CPC):** Mr. Chair, I will be splitting my time with the hon. member for Mississauga East—Cooksville.

I am thankful for the opportunity to speak this evening to this matter of vital importance to the people of Ukraine, Ukrainian Canadians and people everywhere who cherish freedom, democracy and the rule of law.

I know that members of Parliament from all parties share my concern over the conviction of Yulia Tymoshenko last week to seven years in prison over allegations stemming from the handling of a natural gas deal with Russia. Fair-minded observers everywhere call into question the charges and the conduct of the trial. The Government of Canada and our western allies have condemned the actions of the Ukraine government, and rightly so.



I have had several discussions with Ukrainian Canadians in my riding of Etobicoke—Lakeshore. These include organizations active in the greater Toronto area and across Canada, such as the Ukrainian Canadian Congress and the League of Ukrainian Canadians, among others. They ask that the Canadian government work with our allies to press the government of Ukraine to implement fair measures to ensure a fair and independent judiciary.

Much has been said about the flaws of the trial, including: the apparent political motivation of the charges, pressed by President Yanukovich, who narrowly defeated Ms. Tymoshenko in the 2010 presidential election; the jailing of Ms. Tymoshenko during her trial, even though she posed little risk of flight; her lack of access to defence counsel; inadequate time and facilities provided for the preparation of her defence; the judge further denying Ms. Tymoshenko the right to examine witnesses under the same conditions as witnesses for the prosecution; and the additional sentencing that Ms. Tymoshenko be barred from participating in political activity for a period of three years after her sentence.

We should make it clear that the threats to freedom and democracy in Ukraine are not limited to the Tymoshenko trial. Several opposition figures are facing similar charges to those brought against Ms. Tymoshenko. These political trials are incompatible with the requirements of the Ukrainian constitution, the laws of Ukraine, the state's international obligations and generally accepted norms.

We need to be clear that political persecution, in Ukraine or anywhere else, is completely unacceptable. Canada will not stand silent while the proud people of Ukraine have their hard-won rights trampled upon.

On October 14 of this year, I had the pleasure of participating in a tribute to our Prime Minister where he received the Taras Shevchenko medal for his dedication to public service, for his leadership and, in particular, for the outstanding contribution he made toward the development of the Ukrainian Canadian community.

First presented in 1961, the Taras Shevchenko medal is the Ukrainian Canadian Congress' highest honour. The Prime Minister is in good company, joining the first Canadian Prime Minister to receive this award, the Right Hon. John Diefenbaker.

Taras Shevchenko was a great artist and a renowned poet but, most important, he was a voice for freedom in Ukraine. As a consequence, Czar Nicholas I condemned him to live in exile. He was sentenced to live, "Under the strictest surveillance, without a right to write or paint".

Now even that cruel sentence could not silence Shevchenko. In the decades that followed, his words and conduct would inspire Ukrainians to fight for liberty against not only the Czars, but also the totalitarian ideologies of the Soviets and Nazis.

What binds our two countries are values and principles. When Ukraine declared independence in 1991, Canada was the first western country to recognize its sovereignty. On December 1, Ukraine declared independence and, on December 2, Canada recognized its statehood and government.

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Why? We all heaved an enormous sigh of relief when Soviet communism was finally and irrefutably discredited. The communist ideology had purported to be the cure for all that ails humanity. It had one major problem. Before it could implement its program, it had to jail or kill everyone who disagreed. Millions were murdered and millions more were starved. It is a past that must not be forgotten, that must never be swept under the carpet.

We stand with the people of Ukraine to ensure that Ukraine's history is not forgotten. In 2008, at the initiative of my colleague, the hon. member for Selkirk—Interlake, we had the chance to finally do something about it, and we did. We recognized Holodomor as a genocide by Canada's Parliament, so that we may never forget.

Going forward, we must let the government of Ukraine know that we implore Ukraine to respect human rights and the rule of law. We also implore Ukraine to ensure free and fair elections in the upcoming election and going forward into the future.

• (2010)

We look forward to a brighter future for Ukraine. We stand with the people of Ukraine in demanding respect for human rights, a fair and independent judicial system and freedom for all political prisoners.

[Translation]

**Ms. Alexandrine Latendresse (Louis-Saint-Laurent, NDP):** Mr. Chair, I thank my hon. colleague for his very interesting speech. I would like to know what the government plans to do in order to put these words into action. Basically, we are all very concerned about the current situation. Will any concrete action be taken in order to indicate to the Ukrainian government that we disagree with what it is doing and why? What can we do to send a clear message?

**Mr. Bernard Trottier:** Mr. Chair, last week the Prime Minister wrote a letter to the Ukrainian President to express our disappointment regarding the Ukrainian government's actions. The wording of the letter was quite strong. It is important that Ukraine and the entire international community know that we do not agree with the Ukrainian government's actions. It is also important that the people of Ukraine read our comments in newspapers, online and through any other means of communication. The people must know that Canadians stand in solidarity with them. This will give them strength to resist the appalling actions of the Ukrainian government. These concrete gestures, these forms of communication, are, in a way, the most important thing we can do in the short term.

In the medium term, we must commit to take action with our allies, that is, Europe, the United States and other countries that share our values. We need a unified effort with our allies in order to have an influence on Ukraine and its government, which is resisting our country's requests. That is what we will do.

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• (2015)

[English]

**Mr. Peter Goldring (Edmonton East, CPC):** Mr. Chair, it has been asked several times tonight in the debate whether this will do any good and what will make a difference.

When I was in Ukraine, through the 10 days of the Orange Revolution, 500,000 people were in Independence Square day and night. Standing there at midnight, listening to the national anthem wafting up through the snowstorm and up the hills where I was by the Ukrainian hotel, the enthusiasm was there, the regularity was there for the 10 days. The people of Ukraine were there because it was for their democracy. It was for their vote.

When I spoke on the stage at Independence Square to 500,000 people, I told them that Canada was with them. The applause from my comments through the interpreter was absolutely incredible.

I believe then and through the follow-up elections we experienced the pride that the Ukrainians showed that they did know how to do democracy and that they did want to have democratic elections.

Now we come to whether this will have any effect. This will be shown in Ukraine and I believe that in Ukraine they will speak up knowing that Canada is there giving them support.

Does the member think this will help?

**Mr. Bernard Trottier:** Mr. Chair, absolutely, I think this will help.

I think the eyes of the world are upon Ukraine. I think the government of Ukraine knows that and the people of Ukraine know that. The more we keep repeating that message, the more they will know that we are with them and the more these actions will come to bear.

There are other questions that come about with respect to the trade and investments we are making. However, we need to continue to engage the people of Ukraine and increase those lines of communication. That is our preferred route and we will continue to press those actions.

**Mr. Leon Benoit (Vegreville—Wainwright, CPC):** Mr. Chair, when President Yanukovich was first elected there was concern that he might move Ukraine more toward Russia and away from the west. However, that has not happened and, to me, that just magnifies the importance of Canada helping to put pressure on against the imprisonment of Yulia Tymoshenko and the whole process that led up to that. It is pretty clear to an outsider that this process, arrest and trial were not proper.

I had concerns when the new president was elected but my concerns did not come to pass. However, we now see this. I would like the member to comment on how he sees this situation and on the importance of once again pressuring Ukraine to back off and respect democracy, respect the judicial process beginning with this arrest and this situation.

**Mr. Bernard Trottier:** Mr. Chair, the hon. member is right. Even Russia is displeased with the actions and the words of the Ukraine government. Basically, the Ukrainian government was deploring the activities of Russia and saying that it acted in bad faith when it negotiated the gas deal.

I think Ukraine is finding itself more and more isolated in the international community. I think there is a certain need for all countries to be, not just economically engaged but to feel accepted in that community. The more we voice those strong words of disapproval and the more we isolate Ukraine, the more we can bring about judicial independence, freedom and human rights in that country.

• (2020)

**Mr. Wladyslaw Lizon (Mississauga East—Cooksville, CPC):** Mr. Chair, in the year that Ukrainian Canadians celebrate the 120th anniversary of their settlement in Canada and the 20th anniversary of the independence of Ukraine the judicial persecution of Yulia Tymoshenko is an extremely troubling development.

Our government has made it clear that we have a serious concern about the apparent bias in the ongoing judicial challenges being faced by Yulia Tymoshenko.

No matter what country we reside in, political persecution is completely unacceptable and the appearance of political bias shows contempt for the rule of law.

From coast to coast, Ukrainian Canadians make significant contributions to our society in business, sports, academia, medicine and numerous other fields. We often need to remind ourselves how hard and long the struggle for basic freedom can be for some of our world's citizens. When reminding ourselves of this, as Canadians we take great pride in knowing that our government is urging the Ukrainian government to strengthen its judicial independence. We also continue to support the efforts of the Ukrainian people to build a peaceful, democratic and prosperous society within their country.

The conduct of the trial of Yulia Tymoshenko does not reflect the due process, fairness or accepted norms that Canadians value in our legal system. The conditions and context of which the verdict was reached and handed down raises deep concerns about the possibility of political motivation being the main factor in the questionable conviction of Yulia Tymoshenko.

The independence, fairness and transparency of this trial bring forward many questions to ask Canadians and citizens all around the world. Canadians pride themselves on being able to promote the strength and growth of democracy, both at home and around the world. We all know that judicial independence and a vigorous political opposition are vital to building a democratic and prosperous nation. However, the development in the prosecution of Yulia Tymoshenko affects all of us and our government is very concerned about the path that the government of Ukraine appears to be taking.

Legislation introduced in the Verkhovna Rada would decriminalize actions of the type included in the Tymoshenko case. The president is now on record as saying that the changes to the criminal code may apply retroactively but would not apply to Mrs. Tymoshenko.

These developments may have serious consequences for our bilateral relationship and for all Canadians who value democracy and the right of law that so many fight and die for and who are standing together with the people of Ukraine encouraging a fair and peaceful end to this unacceptable situation.



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I appeal to all democratic nations who hold sacred the concept of democracy and good governance to join with us against the great injustice being forced upon Yulia Tymoshenko.

I am very emotional because I am an immigrant to this country. I was born and raised in communist Poland which is now independent Poland, a neighbour of Ukraine. I can see that old forces are being reborn in that country. These people deserve the best.

I would echo a question that was raised here, that being whether what we are doing here would have any effect on what is happening in Ukraine. It does. We have to support these people. It will encourage them to maintain their fight. It will encourage them to move ahead.

As all members will remember, we supported the Ukrainian people through the Orange Revolution where the election of the president was overturned as a result of the movement in the international community. We have to support the people of Ukraine. They should not feel that they are left alone. We are a democratic country. We must help others achieve the same democratic freedom we have in Canada, the greatest country in the world.

● (2025)

**Mr. Leon Benoit (Vegreville—Wainwright, CPC):** Mr. Chair, having immigrated from Poland, my colleague comes from a country that has an extremely close relationship with Ukraine because at times there has in fact been no separation.

A few days ago the Prime Minister received the top award that could be presented to someone who is not a citizen of Ukraine. At that very time our Minister of Foreign Affairs used some strong language on what this action against Yulia Tymoshenko could mean to the relationship between Canada and Ukraine. He said:

Today's developments may have serious consequences for our bilateral relationship.

In diplomatic terms, that is very strong language.

Members across are asking what Canada will do. It has already done a lot. It is a process and we have to continue taking steps. We all hope that this take note debate will be an important event in that process.

I ask the member to comment on the importance of the Prime Minister receiving that top award at the same time these other unfortunate events are happening. It seems contradictory. The member would understand what is happening in Ukraine better than most people. I would ask him to comment on that.

**Mr. Wladyslaw Lizon:** Mr. Chair, it is tough for me and for many people in the democratic world to watch what is happening in Ukraine.

With regard to the Prime Minister receiving the highest award from the Ukrainian Canadian Congress, it is a great recognition of the government's contribution toward a free Ukraine and freedom in Ukraine.

With respect to the question of what impact what is happening here will have in Ukraine, I can speak from personal experience.

In 1981, I was still in Poland. The communist government in Poland introduced martial law to break up the first independent

labour movement in that part of Europe under the Soviet regime. People were glued to their radios and TVs in the hope that the world would support us. The world did support us. Thanks to other democratic societies, Poland was successful. Then Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania and other countries were successful in their fight for democracy, as well as Ukraine. We should fight for them all together here as should all democratic countries in the world.

**Mr. Peter Goldring (Edmonton East, CPC):** Mr. Chair, I echo my colleague's comments and will add a bit to them also.

During the Orange Revolution in Independent Square, of all of the Ukrainian flags probably the second most prominent flag was the Polish flag. I interacted with many Polish people during that period of time. Coming back from the Orange Revolution, when it was time to send monitors to Ukraine, I had many meetings with Ambassador Ogrodzinski. We had very good discussions.

I want to underline that Poland was extremely instrumental in helping out both here in Canada and in Ukraine. I believe Walesa was in Ukraine speaking as well. There was very good support.

● (2030)

**Mr. Wladyslaw Lizon:** Mr. Chair, Walesa was speaking at the square as was the former president of Poland. However, there were many other democratic leaders who spoke both in Ukraine and outside Ukraine and that was important.

It is important that we support everybody in the world who is fighting for freedom and democracy.

**Ms. Jinny Jogindera Sims (Newton—North Delta, NDP):** Mr. Chair, it is my pleasure to speak in support of the motion put forward by the government for discussion and debate of this issue.

One of the questions that was asked earlier was whether this debate tonight will have an impact anywhere. The very fact that we are having a debate and that parliamentarians are willing to be in the House until the wee hours means that we give this issue significance. We are here because we are concerned about the state of democracy in Ukraine. When democracy is attacked or is undermined in any country around the world it has a ricochet effect on the countries not just around it but also internationally, right around the world.

Today I am hoping that people of Ukrainian origin are listening. If they are not I am sure they will hear about the debate because they have serious concerns. The diaspora from Ukraine exists in huge numbers in Canada. Its members have expressed very clearly through papers they have published that they have grave concerns regarding what is happening in their homeland. They are Canadians now but have kept their connections with their birth country or their ancestral nation and I read in a document produced by the Ukrainian Canadian Congress that it has serious concerns about the undermining of democracy in Ukraine.

We all know that for a democratic system to work there has to be a separation between the judicial and the executive branches. When those two lines get murky, crossed or get into a grey area democracy suffers. One of the underlying institutional legacies or underpinnings of a democracy is to have the executive and the judicial branches separated. That has disintegrated in Ukraine.

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When politicians are in power there is room for political debate. We all know that. We engage in wonderful political debate in the House day in and day out. At times we are a bit more passionate. However, that political debate is fundamental to our parliamentary democracy. We share our different points of view. During the electoral process we take part in elections. We express our different platforms. We express our different points of view. In the end, the voters decide.

When voters make a decision to elect a government, in that process they also elect an opposition. That opposition has a critical role to play in a democratic system like ours. In Ukraine it is that system that is being undermined. The leader of the government in power, the president, is using his executive power to punish the opposition for having different points of view. He has done this through the judicial system by direct interference. As we all know, there is only one way to sort out political differences and that is through debate, not by persecution and the court system.

We must ask ourselves what our role is in a place like this. I was delighted to hear that our government representatives have sent a strong message to Ukraine stating that what it is doing is undermining democracy and that is not acceptable to us. A good tack for us to take is to keep talking with that government. We must use diplomacy whenever we can.

● (2035)

We can maybe make gains through the use of diplomacy, but at the same time we do have some cards in our hand. The EU is willing to exercise that card and say that the officials either play nice and start respecting democratic institutions or it is not signing a document right now. It is not saying that it is never going to sign. In a similar way we are in bilateral negotiations with Ukraine right now. We should not say that we withdraw and that we will never have an agreement. However, to go along with what the Ukrainian diaspora has asked us, we should say that any free trade agreement that we sign has to have human rights protections and has to have protections for those who have a different point of view.

That is not us saying that we do not want to have a free trade agreement. What we are trying to say is we want to influence that. This is a powerful tool that countries like Canada have whereby we can use our influence to further human rights. I would urge our negotiators to do that. Without the protection of human rights and without a rule of law, then we have to question whether Ukraine has a democracy. Those two things are really fundamental.

I am also look at our commitments to Ukraine through CIDA. I notice that in 2009 Canada made Ukraine a focus of its work. We invested millions of dollars to improve economic opportunities for Ukrainians in a strengthened democracy. We need to use and work with the CIDA projects there on the strengthening democracy part. Sometimes we think when we observe elections, which is critical, that is it. However, looking at what is happening in Ukraine, there was a need for some kind of intervention and monitoring long before that. We need to empower NGOs so they can work with civil society to build and strengthen democracy.

Our wonderful parliamentarian project, whereby we brought young people here, are wonderful opportunities to model democracy.

Those young kids will take that back to their homeland and they will become strong players right there and then.

I do not think I have heard anyone saying that we need to withdraw all relations with Ukraine, and I am not saying that either. I am saying let us use the tools we have and one of the tools is the free trade negotiations. Let us use that free trade agreement, which is critical for Ukraine as much as it has advantages for us, to gain some protection for human rights.

There is also the money expended through CIDA. Let us look at our mandate, which is strengthening democracy. Let us see how we can use, redirect or focus the work to strengthen democracy by working with civil society organizations.

In a democracy another thing that is absolutely important is protection for the media. The report prepared by the Ukrainian congress talks about the threats to media freedom. When the media is being threatened and it cannot report the news and feel muzzled from reporting what is going on, that is a step toward an authoritarian state. Surely at this time we would not want to further negotiations with an authoritarian state without saying to it that these are the kinds of things we are looking for and want it to take a look at.

Reporters are saying that they are being threatened and they are being quiet. The way licenses are being given out for media outlets, which are tied to the judicial system as well as to the cabinet, also forms a great concern.

● (2040)

There are also human rights abuses and intimidation. This is not just about the leader of the opposition. She is not the only target. There are many others. All of us have a responsibility to advocate for a very strong democracy in Ukraine.

**Mr. Peter Goldring (Edmonton East, CPC):** Mr. Chair, it seems to me that there is a fixation on trade agreements. I would like to ask my colleague this. If the government did put in free trade agreements that democracy and human rights issues would be respected, would the NDP then vote for free trade agreements?

**Ms. Jinny Jogindera Sims:** Mr. Chair, I do not have any kind of obsession with free trade agreements, just so everybody knows. I can think of many other things with which I would rather have obsessions.

Right now, one of the tools that Canada has in its pocket is the free trade negotiations. From what I am reading, the Ukrainian Canadian Congress is looking to have those rights enshrined. It is not just having the words there. It is actually putting the words into practice.

[Translation]

**Ms. Alexandrine Latendresse (Louis-Saint-Laurent, NDP):** Mr. Chair, I would like to thank my colleague for her excellent speech. It was very interesting. I want to come back to a fairly crucial point in her speech. She spoke about the separation of the executive and the judiciary. Separation of these two branches is truly of the utmost importance to a society.

I would like her to speak more about the many problems this could cause and what historical factors could have caused the line between the two branches to be blurred.



[English]

**Ms. Jinny Jogindera Sims:** Mr. Chair, some members may not know, but I used to be a history teacher. One of the things I have learned through my studies, and as I have looked back at different governments, is that as soon as a government loses the absolute demarcation between the judicial system, the executive system and the executive branch, there is a fundamental undermining of democracy. This is where not only the judicial system has to be separated from the executive branch and the decision-making body, parliament, but also the need to protect freedom of speech and immunity for the media so it can report on what it sees without fear of being persecuted. Absolutely it is a core fundamental for a democratic society.

**Mr. Bob Dechert (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, CPC):** Mr. Chair, the hon. member heard this evening that last Friday in Toronto the Prime Minister was awarded the highest honour of Ukrainian Canadian Congress, the Taras Shevchenko award. In response to receiving that award, he said as follows:

So to be clear, our government is very concerned about the path the Government of Ukraine appears to be taking. Tuesday's developments may have serious consequences for our bilateral relationship. The Ukrainian people can count on Canada to stand-up for their liberty. Canada is always ready to help...to help democratic institutions take root, in Ukraine and around the world.

Could the hon. member tell us if she agrees with those statements by the Prime Minister and if she believes that the people of Ukraine will hear those statements?

• (2045)

**Ms. Jinny Jogindera Sims:** Mr. Chair, I agree with those words. Those were the right words to be said at that time. The Prime Minister of Canada was honoured by the diaspora of people from Ukraine originally. It is the highest honour and it is appropriate that at that meeting he talked about a topic that was kind of the undercurrent and brought it out into the open.

It is because the Prime Minister has taken that position already that I believe it allows us a platform to move forward and put further pressure on the Ukrainian government today. I believe tonight's debate will put pressure on the Ukrainian government and then we will have to look at other ways we can do it as well. Often words are not enough. Sometimes they have to be backed up with something and we have a few tools in our back pocket.

**Mr. Leon Benoit (Vegreville—Wainwright, CPC):** Mr. Chair, I would like to commend the hon. member opposite for her very effective presentation tonight. People of Ukrainian ancestry and Ukrainian heritage in my constituency, even when Ukraine was part of the Soviet Union, had close contacts. Many visited family that were unfortunately stuck in the Soviet Union and had been unable to immigrate to Canada. Many immigrated to Canada in the late part of the 1800s.

We saw a progression. At first it was just trying to help their families survive in Soviet Ukraine, then there came a time later. I remember in the early 1980s, Ukraine was still part of the Soviet Union, but at that time some Ukrainian farmers came over to learn about farm business management. I was a farm economist at the time so I did a little work with them. They were trying to learn how to

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manage a farm. It was hopeless because they did not understand the free enterprise system at all.

Then we saw democracy come. From there, a very slow development I would argue, but hope. Canadians of Ukrainian heritage were visiting more. They saw new hope and things were moving ahead. Now we have this.

On August 6, Yulia Tymoshenko was arrested. By the way, she is a former prime minister, a very prominent political figure and currently a member of the opposition. When she was arrested, this is the statement from the Minister of Foreign Affairs:

Canada is concerned by the apparently politically motivated persecution, and now arrest, of Yulia Tymoshenko. The appearance of political bias in judicial proceedings undermines the rule of law. Canada urges the Ukrainian government to strengthen judiciary independence and continues to support efforts to build a peaceful, democratic and prosperous society in Ukraine.

Then on October 11, the Minister of Foreign Affairs made this statement, "In my recent letter to President Viktor Yanukovich, I urged the Ukrainian government to strengthen judicial independence and capacity". He went on to say, "Today's developments may have serious consequences for our bilateral relationship".

The member has already mentioned the trade deal. Specifically, what other actions would she take from here if she were in a position to actually determine what the Government of Canada would do in relation to this situation in Ukraine?

**Ms. Jinny Jogindera Sims:** Mr. Chair, I will try to answer the question as fully as I can.

Right now what has been done so far is to raise the issue. That has been done both by the Prime Minister and the Minister of Foreign Affairs. The other thing that has been done is this. In the last quote the member read there was a direct hit that bilateral relations were in jeopardy. Those are very calculated steps being taken, and one step at a time. We know that for the Ukraine the free trade agreement is a very important agreement, just as being a member of the EU is very important for them.

We do not want to isolate Ukraine. That is not what I am saying. However, we can use that tool. We could also use the tool of some of our CIDA projects to actually support civil society more. In many ways it is when civil society gets strengthened and the strength is internal that it works from that end. Then our job, being another nation, is to work from the diplomatic end using whatever tools we can.

• (2050)

**Mr. Bob Dechert (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, CPC):** Mr. Chair, I would just like to say at the outset that I will be splitting my time with the hon. member for Souris—Moose Mountain.

I welcome the opportunity to rise today to participate in this significant and timely debate. As members know, Canada has led the international outcry against the conviction last week of former prime minister Yulia Tymoshenko. Following the news of her conviction, the Minister of Foreign Affairs issued a very strong statement expressing Canada's concern over the ways in which the arrest, prosecution and conviction of Yulia Tymoshenko were carried out by Ukrainian authorities.

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In August, when Ms. Tymoshenko was first arrested, our government stressed that the appearance of political bias in judicial proceedings undermines the rule of law and urged the Ukrainian government to strengthen judiciary independence. In September, both the Prime Minister and the Minister of Foreign Affairs wrote to Ukrainian President Yanukovich, again expressing Canada's concern about the process and the appearance of political motivations in judicial proceedings.

Canada is not alone in expressing this dismay. Both the European Union and the United States, for example, have condemned the trial and conviction, speaking of the selective application of justice in politically motivated prosecutions. We owe it to the more than 1.2 million Ukrainian Canadians, who have done so much to help build this country of ours, to make it as clear as we possibly can to Ukrainian authorities that they must respect the fundamentals of human rights and the rule of law.

The terrible irony of this is that President Yanukovich came to power in 2010 in a presidential election recognized as free and fair. This was a real milestone in Ukraine's democratic development. Yet here we find the actions of this administration working to subvert the very institutions that brought it to power.

A double irony is that more than 300 Canadians participated in that electoral process as election observers, in a contribution to Ukraine's democratic development that we have been making since 2004. Our support for the development of democratic institutions in Ukraine is but one example of what Canada and Canadians have done to help build a democratic Ukraine following its independence in 1991. After 70 years of Soviet rule, there was certainly a lot of building to do on the democratic front. To speak of a democratic deficit after all that time is putting it very mildly, to say the least.

What had to be built was not just the institutions and the processes, but all the checks and balances that we take for granted here in Canada, all those instruments that ensure the people's will is respected. What had to be built was a belief in democracy, the belief that people's voices could matter, that "a government must work in the interests of its people, not the other way around", as the Prime Minister said last year when he was in Ukraine. Such reconstruction takes a long time.

The Orange Revolution of 2004 was one of the first bold and courageous realizations of this power of the people in newly independent Ukraine. Expressing their anger at the political corruption they believed had tainted the presidential elections, Ukrainians in the thousands took to the streets and remained there until those results were tossed out and the election was re-held. We heard from some impassioned speakers earlier this evening who were actually there at that time, and we heard about the reactions of the people of Ukraine to that very important Orange Revolution.

While many of the promises of the Orange Revolution were not met in the years that followed, there was democratic progress with the increased media and political freedoms. It is those fought-for freedoms that are now once again under attack, and the Tymoshenko case is but one of many. More than 12 members and senior officials of the previous government have been detained in criminal probes. In addition to Mrs. Tymoshenko, one former minister has been jailed

and another has fled and successfully claimed political asylum in the Czech Republic.

I am confident that such bullying will not win the day. We must continue to urge the Ukrainian government to strengthen judicial independence and to support efforts to build a peaceful, democratic and prosperous society in Ukraine, because our ties with the Ukrainian people are significant.

Who can forget the generosity of the Ukrainian-Canadian community in 1991, which largely covered the cost of the opening of the Ukrainian embassy in Ottawa following its independence? That generosity and principled support is reflected in the support we have provided Ukraine since its independence in 1991.

• (2055)

This support has been provided on all fronts: through aid, and Canada is the fourth-largest donor of bilateral assistance to Ukraine; through military training co-operation programs; and through assistance in helping to reduce the trafficking of nuclear and radiological materials, which are a dark legacy of the Soviet era.

These political show trials designed to intimidate and destroy democratic voices of opposition must come to an end. If the Ukrainian government is serious about tackling corruption, as it claims, then it needs to do so through a transparent process that respects international standards and is clearly and genuinely independent.

As has been pointed out by many commentators, Tymoshenko went on trial for establishing legally binding agreements, the legality of which have not been contested. Making criminal that which is perceived to be a bad or incorrect decision by an elected official, which would seem to be the case in the Tymoshenko trial, is obviously denying the true source of authority—

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bruce Stanton):** Order. We will move now to questions and comments. The hon. member for British Columbia Southern Interior.

**Mr. Alex Atamanenko (British Columbia Southern Interior, NDP):** Mr. Chair, I would like to ask that my colleague provide some comments on the following.

Mr. Alexander Turchinov, who is the first deputy head of the Batkivshchina party in Ukraine, said that the latest actions of the Security Service of Ukraine, SBU, are a continuation of the political repression against the opposition and that the latest charges against Yulia Tymoshenko regarding debts owed by the United Energy Systems of Ukraine to Russia are groundless and absurd, and that the new accusations against Yulia Tymoshenko are even more absurd than the failed cases that were announced, forged and investigated over the last year.

Would my colleague agree that there seems to be a pattern of silencing the opposition? We have had examples presented this evening of others. Would my colleague agree that this is sort of the pinnacle of silencing the main person who might oppose the current president in the next election?



**Mr. Bob Dechert:** Mr. Chair, I certainly do agree with the member. I think we are seeing a pattern here, as I mentioned in my remarks a moment ago.

It is not just Yulia Tymoshenko who is being persecuted for participating in the democratic process in Ukraine. There are several others as well. There seems to be a pattern here, and that is why our Prime Minister wrote on October 14 to President Yanukovich and he:

...let him know that I am deeply concerned that the conduct of Tymoshenko's trial does not reflect accepted norms of due process or fairness. We all know that a vigorous political opposition and judicial independence are vital to building a democratic and prosperous Ukraine. Canada will support Ukraine whenever it moves towards freedom, democracy and justice.

However our foreign policy is rooted in principle and in the defence of freedom. As the member has pointed out, these other cases seem to fall against the principles of democracy and freedom, and we will oppose them as well.

**Mr. Wladyslaw Lizon (Mississauga East—Cooksville, CPC):** Mr. Chair, I would like to remind all my colleagues in this House that in the case of Ukraine, we are dealing with people who are not playing by the same rules as we are used to in democratic countries. These are people who are using the judicial system to get rid of political opponents, to get rid of the free press and to get rid of people who have different views. We have to realize that.

If we have to take decisive action, as a democratic country, we should not be afraid to take it. I would like my colleague to comment on this.

• (2100)

**Mr. Bob Dechert:** Mr. Chair, just a few moments ago the member for Mississauga East—Cooksville made a very impassioned speech here.

This is a gentleman who knows of what he speaks. This is a man who lived under Communist oppression in Poland and who came to Canada with his dreams of freedom and democracy. He told us this evening that the people of Ukraine will hear our words and that it will hearten them, embolden them to stand up for freedom in their country.

I just want to take this opportunity to thank him for those words. Those are words that I could not have said myself, not having lived under the system in which he once lived. I think that people across Canada should hear those words and realize that the things we are saying here in the House of Commons this evening and that all Canadians are saying about this terrible attack on democracy in Ukraine will bring some comfort to our friends in Ukraine. Canada will stand with them at this time and demand freedom, democracy and the rule of law in Ukraine.

**Mr. Ed Komarnicki (Souris—Moose Mountain, CPC):** Mr. Chair, it is certainly a privilege and honour to speak with respect to this motion that expresses concern regarding the ongoing erosion of democracy in Ukraine, including the most recent politically motivated, arbitrary prosecution and conviction of former prime minister Yulia Tymoshenko by Ukrainian authorities. There is no question that this is a very important motion and debate taking place.

I had the opportunity to visit Ukraine and take part in the monitoring of elections. I was of the view that Ukraine had turned a

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corner and was well on its way with respect to democracy and justice.

I also count it an honour and a privilege to speak today because my grandfather, Nicolas, originated from the Ivano-Frankivsk area in the southwestern part of Ukraine. He came here searching for democracy and freedom. It is something to be cherished for sure.

When we were there for the monitoring of the elections prior to 2010, it was impressed upon me that Ukraine had the opportunity to go forward. Ukraine had the opportunity to be an example of what can happen. When a government leads in a democracy, it means leading for the good of the people and not for the good of oneself. We can see that it had that potential.

One of the tenets of a democracy is the fact that one has to be able to lose in a fair and free democratic election. One cannot choose to silence opponents by placing them in jail, threatening them or targeting them. It just does not work that way.

Some of the fundamentals of democracy are the right to a fair trial, the right to be presumed innocent and the right to have a trial, so that those watching could say that not only was justice served but it was seen to be done. We cannot have the suspicion that follows a targeting of a number of individuals who were political leaders.

Yulia Tymoshenko was the leader of the largest opposition political party in the Verkhovna Rada. She was also the prime minister in 2005 and from 2007 to 2010. These are people who held public office and made decisions while in public office.

The Prime Minister stated in his address to the Canadian Ukrainian Congress:

...we know that a vigorous political opposition and judicial independence are vital to building a democratic and prosperous Ukraine.

Those are the two pillars that are very important in a democracy. We have a challenge to the political opposition using the tools of government and the tools of the judiciary. In fact, if it is the judiciary itself stifling that opposition, then we are on a backward path. It is something that should not be allowed to happen.

It was good that the Prime Minister wrote to President Yanukovich. He wanted to let him know that he was deeply concerned that the conduct of Tymoshenko's trial does not reflect the accepted norms of due process and fairness.

When we look at the sentence that was handed out, seven years, it is quite remarkable, given the upcoming parliamentary elections in 2012 and presidential elections in 2015. How can they be declared free and fair elections if the leaders of the two opposition parties, including the leader of the official opposition, are not able to participate? It is unthinkable.

However, this is only the tip of the iceberg. When we look at what happens to the freedom of the press, freedom of assembly and freedom of speech, we see they are all being stifled. When we look at what has happened to the political leaders in broad daylight, we see it is a symptom of something deeper that is taking place throughout society and that must not be allowed.

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During the Orange Revolution we saw hope and aspiration to a great nationhood by the people who were there. That same hope needs to be rekindled. Although there has been a step or two backward, they must go forward. There were ideals of freedom and democracy that were expressed in the Orange Revolution, and I think this must go ahead.

• (2105)

I would say that what is important is the young people who were there, the impressionable people, those who have tasted democracy and freedom, they cannot go back. As I speak to them, they must not go back. They must go forward.

For those who are in positions of leadership or authority, it is not too late to rectify the wrong that has been done. It is not too late for those who have been sentenced to have those sentences changed under an appeal or otherwise so they can participate in an election. It is time to go forward, not backward.

**Mr. Peter Goldring (Edmonton East, CPC):** Mr. Chair, my colleague mentioned earlier that there was a culture of intimidation in some of the old style Soviet regimes.

I have to relate a story about the 2004 failed election that I was at where there was president-elect Yanukovych, the same person, and the supporting regime to support his election and to maintain the election. In the period of time that I was there, I was followed by the secret police. There was a pool of blood in my room to intimidate me. There were bowls of fruit to scare me, with the poisoning scares that were going on. Telephone calls were quitting in the middle of conversations. Telephone calls were going silent at one end. It was constant. Why? It was because I was reporting from Independence Square back to Canada, telling Canadians what the realities of the situation were there.

It was a culture of intimidation then and it looks as though this culture of intimidation is returning once again.

**Mr. Ed Komarnicki:** Mr. Chair, it is obvious that the hon. member has had the opportunity to see what it can be like. He also was present to see the hopes and aspirations of the people. It is difficult to hold back those hopes and aspirations except by using tactics that revert back to the old days when people were suppressed, when people could not express themselves and when they could not enjoy the freedom to speak, to assemble and to make their thoughts known. However, they have tasted that freedom. They know what it is about and it would be wrong and perilous to try to revert back to the old system.

The people of Ukraine must be given the opportunity to go forward, to experience the benefits of democracy and experience what a true judicial system can be like where one can actually have charges that are not trumped up but charges that are based on fact, have a foundation and are presented in a fair way where one can defend oneself and be presumed innocent.

We look forward to actions being taken by the present authorities to fix what was wrong by doing what is right.

• (2110)

**Mr. Leon Benoit (Vegreville—Wainwright, CPC):** Mr. Chair, in the House of Commons, when we want to silence the opposition we do it through connecting better with the Canadian public. We do it

through better debate in the House of Commons. We do it through having positions that are favoured by more people than the opposition. That is the way we do it here in a democratic country.

That is why, when we see what is happening in Ukraine and we see a former prime minister go through a completely bogus set of charges, trial and end up in jail, we know it is an extremely serious situation that is being faced. In fact, this situation is pivotal to the long-term future of Ukraine. It cannot just be forgotten. If this action that has been taken is not reversed, I do not see, when it comes to the European Union, the United States and Canada, where we can just back off and pretend it did not happen. We believe in democracy. We just cannot do that or we fail the people of Ukraine and we fail our democratic principles.

How important does the member think this situation is? What kind of implications could there be, and probably will be, if these bogus charges, these arrests, of not only the former prime minister, are not dealt with in a way that is more befitting a democracy? What could the possible long-term implications be for Ukraine?

**The Deputy Chair:** Before I go to the member for Souris—Moose Mountain, I would kindly remind all members to pay attention to the Chair during questions and answers so that assistance with timing can be given.

The hon. member for Souris—Moose Mountain, a short answer please.

**Mr. Ed Komarnicki:** Thank you, Mr. Chair, and we will certainly be watching for your signal.

This is a very serious matter. It is a matter that, if the course is not changed, will work to the detriment of the existing leadership and certainly to the Ukrainian people. The people need to be reassured. Their trust needs to be regained. They need to see some progressive steps taken that will not cause them to revert to where they were, but to go forward. I think the aspirations of the young people especially and Ukrainians in general is that they not be repressed any further.

I would suggest that this course needs to be reversed and, by putting pressure on various levels by various people, this can yet be changed.

**Mr. Alex Atamanenko (British Columbia Southern Interior, NDP):** Mr. Chair, just as many Canadians, and, I would suspect, everyone in the House, I am deeply concerned about the politically motivated persecution of Ukrainian opposition members, including the former prime minister, Yulia Tymoshenko.

We heard about hope in the Orange Revolution of 2004, as was mentioned here a number of times, by Yulia Tymoshenko and Viktor Yushchenko, who were here. We heard the message of hope and I, being partly of Ukrainian descent, was very happy and pleased that finally Ukraine was having a chance to step into the community of world nations as a true and equal partner.

Then, in 2010, the last presidential election was narrowly won by Viktor Yanukovych.

I was in Ukraine very briefly this summer. I spoke to family members and others and there seems to be a sense of discouragement in the country, especially with the taking of power by Yanukovych.



In doing some research, I found an article in *The Guardian* that illustrates what is going on. What is going on is that a level of corruption has permeated that society for many years. The journalist stated:

Back in 2004, Yanukovych had been caught, embarrassingly, trying to fix the last presidential poll.

The hon. member spoke about his experience being there during the election.

The journalist went on to say that just before the 2010 election he had dinner with some aides to Yanukovych who tried to convince him that Yanukovych was a democrat and a passionate European who believed that Ukraine's geopolitical destiny lay with the European Union, et cetera. He further stated:

Eighteen months later things look rather different. The decision by a Kiev court today to jail Tymoshenko for seven years for abuse of office over a controversial 2009 gas deal with Russia is an unambiguous signal. It says that Yanukovych does not really care what the EU thinks about him. It also confirms that Yanukovych's critics have been saying for some time that under his leadership the country is sliding towards Russian-style "managed democracy" and autocratic rule.

The article went on to state:

Since taking power, Yanukovych has rapidly reversed the fragile democratic gains of the Orange Revolution.

We must remember that it was fragile, it was new.

He has put a squeeze on the country's independent media, with TV now in the hands of a bunch of pro-regime oligarchs. Nosy opposition journalists — such as the investigative reporter Vasyl Klymentyev — have disappeared. In parliament, Yanukovych's Party of the Regions has, using dubious means, achieved a majority. And politically motivated prosecutions have been brought against Tymoshenko and other senior members of her bloc....

There are rumours that following her conviction Yanukovych, having proved his point, will look for some kind of deal. One version is that the charges against her will be "decriminalised"; another that she will be released on payment of a large fine....

But what is clear is that the case was designed to nobble Tymoshenko and to cripple the pro-western, anti-Yanukovych forces she represents.

She is now unable to participate in Ukraine's next two elections: parliamentary ones in 2012, and the next presidential election in 2015. That, presumably, was the idea. Thousands of her supporters took to the streets of Kiev today, protesting noisily against Yanukovych's heavy-handed tactics, reminiscent of Ukraine's backroom politics a decade ago.

The trial bears comparison with that of Mikhail Khodorkovsky, the Russian oligarch who fell out with Vladimir Putin.

We are seeing a pattern.

In some of the research I found, it appears that there is a desire among opposition parties to decriminalize parts of the criminal code that allowed this conviction of ex-prime minister Yulia Tymoshenko. However, there is no agreement by them as to how this should be done. The leader, Ivan Kirilenko of the Batkivshchyna Party, wants the bill to be re-examined at second reading. If this were to happen, President Yanukovych could then tell European politicians in Brussels that the question of opposition prosecution has been resolved. We need to remember that he is going to Brussels soon and he would like to put on a good face.

• (2115)

Nikolai Martynenko, leader of the NU-NS party, supports Kirilenko and demands that the bill be examined. However, the majority, which is the Party of Regions, and its leader, Alexander Efremov, did not come out with a definite position. In fact he said it

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would set a precedent, so he is using political spin. Remember that this is Yanukovych's party. This is obviously very disturbing.

A website for an organization called the Eastern Partnership Community is an analytical portal where ideas about what is happening are debated. A journalist by the name of Valery Kalnysh who is chief of the political desk at the Ukrainian edition of the daily *Kommersant* alludes to the fact that she may be guilty, but he says he doubts whether it was necessary to put her on trial and drag her through the courts for such a slip-up, if in fact, there was one.

He says that the case is clear. He says that the current government is not interested in showing that Ukraine is a state of law, and that Yanukovych is not sending the message that the hand of justice will reach every criminal regardless of how highly they are placed. His conclusion is that the Tymoshenko case is a show trial against the opposition. He also says he could mention about 30 people from Tymoshenko's circle who are in custody now, or have the prosecutor's office breathing down their necks. Meanwhile, there is only one similar case under way concerning a politician from the Party of Regions, which is the majority.

It appears as we look within at what is happening that this is a pattern not just affecting the former prime minister, but an attempt to silence the opposition especially coming up to the next election.

Yulia Mostova, chief editor of the weekly *Dzerkalo Tyzhnya*, says that the Tymoshenko case is the manifestation of a Ukrainian national tradition, the idea that every ruling class has followed this principle of persecuting the opposition since 1991. She says the attack on Yulia Tymoshenko is nothing new, that everyone who follows Ukrainian politics has been expecting it. It does not come as a surprise to those who have been watching this closely, including journalists. She also says that the scale of the actions which have been brought against the former head of government is disproportionate to the offences committed, in her opinion.

What should we do? A number of us have received recommendations from the Ukrainian Canadian Congress. It proposes a strategy for our government. Any action by the Government of Canada must not result in the isolation of Ukraine. We cannot do that. In regard to the trade agreement, we should make it very clear that we would not support an agreement if the human rights of a former prime minister are violated. However, we should not isolate the country.

We should refocus CIDA's strategy. According to the congress, it should focus on supporting Ukrainian NGOs that establish and strengthen political and civic organizations, safeguard elections and promote citizen participation, openness and accountability in government.

Also we should be calling for support for independent media. A number of members have outlined the persecution of the media and that reporters have disappeared. It reminds me of a book I read by a Russian journalist just before she was killed in Moscow for exposing the Putin government and all it was up to.

We have a role to play as parliamentarians and as the Government of Canada to support our Prime Minister in calling for swift action on this case. Other than that, we should not isolate Ukraine. We have to work with our brothers and sisters in Ukraine to finally bring a democratic government to their country.

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• (2120)

*[Translation]*

**Mrs. Anne-Marie Day (Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles, NDP):** Mr. Chair, I thank the member for his speech.

The NDP is very concerned about the political persecution and arrest of members of the Ukrainian opposition. The members of the NDP are asking the government to ensure that human rights are respected in Ukraine.

Can the hon. member tell us how this situation is affecting Canadians of Ukrainian descent?

**Mr. Alex Atamanenko:** Mr. Chair, I would like to thank the hon. member for her question. As a Canadian citizen of Ukrainian and Russian origin, like many Ukrainians here in Canada, I have family there. We have very close relationships with friends and family and it affects us because we are in contact with them. As I said earlier, what is happening there is a bit discouraging. The power is now in the hands of a president who does not represent all of Ukraine but, rather just the eastern region, which is under the influence of Russia. We see it in the country's parliament. Members who come from that region cannot even speak Ukrainian. They give their speeches in Russian. We are monitoring the situation very closely and should continue to do so. We should support Ukraine's citizens so that one day they will be able to have the same rights that we enjoy here in Canada.

• (2125)

*[English]*

**Mr. Wladyslaw Lizon (Mississauga East—Cooksville, CPC):** Mr. Chair, I strongly believe that we Canadians, we parliamentarians on both sides of the House, and I am really sad that there are no members on the Liberal side here, owe—

**The Deputy Chair:** Order. I would remind all members that we do not comment on who is or is not in the chamber during debate.

The hon. member for Mississauga East—Cooksville.

**Mr. Wladyslaw Lizon:** Mr. Chair, I apologize.

We all owe the Ukrainians support in their democratic process. They got their independence 20 years ago. After centuries of struggle, finally they got their independent country. They have to go through a difficult process, but with the support of democratic countries around the world they can succeed. This is what we owe them. We owe them our support.

Of course, we should work here with the Ukrainian Canadian Congress and with the leaders in the political arena in Ukraine to ensure that the remnants of the totalitarian Soviet-style system are shaken up.

If the hon. member on the other side could comment on this, I would really appreciate it.

**Mr. Alex Atamanenko:** Mr. Chair, I am sure the member knows that we have a monument in Canada for victims of totalitarian communism. We know that the Ukrainians as a people suffered under a forced famine where goods and food were taken from them and sent to Europe to the Germans. We have seen documentation. My family suffered. That was a horrendous time in history. Millions of people died at the hands of the Soviet regime. Even prior to the

Soviet regime, my father grew up in the Vinnytsia area of Ukraine. My grandfather was a middle-class farmer. Secondary schooling was in Russian. The language that my father mastered, although he spoke Ukrainian as a child, was Russian. He became a military officer in the czarist army. There was that pressure even then.

As my colleague mentioned, finally Ukraine had a chance to break out of the yoke of repression. We need to support this movement regardless of our origins so Ukraine can peacefully transition into a free and democratic state. I implore all of us to offer our support in any way we can.

*[Translation]*

**Ms. Alexandrine Latendresse (Louis-Saint-Laurent, NDP):** Mr. Chair, I would like to thank the hon. member for his excellent speech. It was very inspiring. I would like to ask him a question about the young generation of Ukrainians. I would like to hear his opinion. Does he think that it would be a good idea to encourage more young Ukrainians to come to university here, to come and see Canada and its democratic institutions? I would like to hear what he has to say about what kind of effect he thinks this might have on Ukraine's population and future.

**Mr. Alex Atamanenko:** Mr. Chair, I thank my colleague for his question. Two years ago, a Ukrainian student worked for my office. He came from Ukraine and we stayed in contact. He is now in the United States.

This is important. Why? People, especially young people, in Ukraine are discouraged. They do not want to be part of the political process. Why not? Because becoming a member of parliament takes millions and millions of dollars. Bribes have to be paid. There is widespread corruption. As a result, the youth are not interested in politics. If more young people came to Canada to learn how things worked, they could take our values back home with them and try to rebuild their country.

• (2130)

*[English]*

**Mr. Leon Benoit (Vegreville—Wainwright, CPC):** Mr. Chair, in his presentation the member acknowledged that it is a very serious situation when a former prime minister and many others are faced with bogus charges and dealt with in what really is not much of a justice system, at least in the procedure that was taken, and imprisoned. He also said that the right thing for Canada to do is not to isolate Ukraine.

If the current regime in Ukraine will not reverse the actions it has taken, what practical next step would the member see Canada taking to deal with the situation so that Ukraine is not isolated?

**Mr. Alex Atamanenko:** Mr. Chair, that is a very good question.

The Ukrainian Canadian Congress has some suggestions which the hon. member has probably read.

Apart from the suggestions, we need to maintain our ties. We need to maintain parliamentary exchanges. We need to have this conversation. It is very difficult to change a regime from the outside, but we need to morally support those who would like to make that change from the inside. I think that is our role.



Should we come out strong against policies? The concern is that we cannot say that Ukraine will be isolated until it cleans up its act. It is a difficult situation.

I will not read them, but there are a number of suggestions from the congress. We could look at them and work with our Ukrainian Canadian friends to come up with a strategy that would continue to involve communication.

My colleague mentioned young people. It is an excellent idea to include many young people in this communication so that they could see there is hope. Then when they enter politics, it will not be about getting involved in corruption and seeing who could be the most corrupt to come out with the best.

There is a future. We must have hope. We are all here because we believe there is hope.

**Mr. Mark Warawa (Langley, CPC):** Mr. Chair, I rise this evening to participate in this important debate on the serious democratic situation in Ukraine. As others have stated before me, this is an important issue, and over the last months Canada has not shied away from making its views known on the situation.

Canada has long been a special partner to Ukraine. For over 20 years we have supported and co-operated with Ukraine as it sought to develop into a free, democratic and prosperous country.

Against this backdrop, I and all Canadians cannot help but find the recent conviction of former prime minister Yulia Tymoshenko to be very troubling. The apparent political motivation behind this act would seem to be not only to eliminate the individual who came so close to defeating current President Yanukovich in the last presidential elections in 2010, but to intimidate and eliminate all political opposition.

I will be sharing my time with the amazing member for Edmonton Centre.

Is this to eliminate and intimidate all political opposition? Those are strong words, and I acknowledge that, but the indications are there for all of us to see.

Sadly, the Yulia Tymoshenko trial and conviction is just the tip of the iceberg. Over the last year, a series of arrests and intimidating actions have been carried out against former opposition members.

I was honoured to be a member of the Canadian delegation that went there in October 2010, and we sensed that things were happening. We met with a number of people, and a lot of concern was expressed to us.

While no one can argue against the fact that it is essential to tackle the scourge of corruption that so cripples Ukraine's economic and social development, it must be tackled in a transparent manner that respects the proper judicial process and the rule of law.

This would appear not to be the case. The prosecutions have been very selective, focusing extensively on leading members of the opposition. There are clear signs that the court proceedings fall far short of internationally recognized norms of fairness, transparency and due process. All of this is deeply distressing to the Ukrainian people, who so courageously stood up against political corruption in

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2004, challenging the presidential election results and forcing the election to be re-held.

The Orange Revolution, as it came to be known, marked a turning point in the newly independent Ukraine's democratic development. We cannot allow the democratic gains won through those brave civil actions to be taken away.

Canada has proudly supported the Ukrainian people as they rebuilt their society after 70 years of Soviet rule. Canada was the first western country to recognize Ukraine's independence in 1991, and we have provided significant assistance since then as part of our special partnership. We have done so out of principle, but also out of friendship. Ours is a deep friendship, rooted in shared values and shared history.

Canada is home to more than 1.2 million Ukrainian Canadians, who collectively have contributed so much to building Canada. I am one of those Canadians whose grandparents came from Ukraine about 115 years ago. I am a proud Canadian and proud of my Ukrainian heritage. I am proud that I was with the Prime Minister in Ukraine.

We owe it to our friends in Ukraine to support them as they work to build a new future.

• (2135)

**Ms. Jinny Jogindera Sims (Newton—North Delta, NDP):** Mr. Chair, my colleague from British Columbia highlighted in his presentation the absolute need for the judicial system to be separate from the executive branch of government.

I would like to ask my colleague what steps he believes the Canadian government could take now to put further pressure on the Ukraine government to start respecting human rights and to make some of the changes that are necessary?

**Mr. Mark Warawa:** Mr. Chair, I want to thank the NDP member across the way. It is not often that everybody in the House will row in the same direction. That is happening tonight, and I know it is going to be happening in the months to follow as we are all committed to seeing democracy, respect for human dignity and the rule of law in Ukraine.

Canada joins many other countries, as do we as parliamentarians. We are world leaders in that respect, working together and challenging Ukraine to do what is right and to be transparent and democratic. As we look at countries throughout the world and the history of the world, we see that countries that are based on democracy and fundamental principles of the rule of law can prosper. If a country does not respect the rule of law and its citizens, that country will not prosper. It is that simple.

We want to see a positive future for Ukraine. We will continue to pull together as parliamentarians and work with other international partners to encourage the Ukraine judiciary to make sure things are done properly and with transparency. The situation with Yulia Tymoshenko hopefully will be reviewed and the right thing will be done, because the opposition cannot be treated in that way.

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● (2140)

**Mr. Leon Benoit (Vegreville—Wainwright, CPC):** Mr. Chair, it has been a tough time for Ukraine and the people of Ukraine since the fall of the wall and the division of the former Soviet Union. I think it has been more difficult for Ukraine than it has been for some of its neighbouring countries, such as Poland, the Czech Republic, or the Baltic states. Certainly Ukraine has had a more difficult time. Progress has been slower.

There was a lot of hope with the Orange Revolution and what has happened since, but now we see a reversal in the situation. To me it is one thing to have slow progress, but it is another thing to have a reversal. It must be extremely disheartening for the people in Ukraine to see this happening. It certainly is for people of Ukrainian descent. I am sure it is for relatives and friends, and it is in my constituency, where there is a large population of people from Ukrainian backgrounds.

This reversal truly is a pivotal time in the history of Ukraine. We do not know where things are going to go from there. Would the member agree that the reversal is certainly quite a different situation from slow progress?

**Mr. Mark Warawa:** Mr. Chair, I would agree that it has been a reversal. Many of us in this Parliament have Ukrainian interns working in our offices. I have asked them if they expected this to happen. They said no. They said they had been watching it closely but had no idea that this was going to be happening. When we were there a year ago, there was no idea that this kind of serious situation would be arising.

We encourage the Ukrainian judiciary to do what is right. The world is encouraging them. There were letters written from the Canada-Ukraine Parliamentary Friendship Group, from the government, and I am sure from many in this Parliament encouraging them to do the right thing. Now we find Yulia Tymoshenko sentenced to seven years in jail.

She cannot serve. That is just not right. We encourage the right thing to be done.

**Hon. Laurie Hawn (Edmonton Centre, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, it is an honour to rise and address the House tonight on this important subject, that of democracy in Ukraine.

The events unfolding in Ukraine right now with respect to the arrest, trial and conviction of former prime minister Yulia Tymoshenko are of deep concern to me, all members and the Government of Canada. This blatant and politically motivated persecution is very troubling and may have serious consequences for Canada's relationship with the Government of Ukraine.

The Prime Minister has written directly to the President of Ukraine indicating his deep concern with this situation. The Minister of Foreign Affairs has stated that the conduct and prosecution of this case by Ukrainian authorities undermines the development of their democratic institutions.

We in this House all agree that a strong and vibrant political opposition and a robust and fully independent judiciary are essential to a Ukraine that is prosperous, democratic and free.

Please allow me to relay to this House some examples of where it appears due process was flagrantly violated in Ms. Tymoshenko's case.

One of the more startling aspects of this trial has been the disregard of Ms. Tymoshenko's right to legal defence by the Constitutional Court. The Constitution of Ukraine, the most important legal document in that country, states:

Everyone shall have the right to legal assistance.

and:

Everyone shall be free to choose the defender of his rights.

However, in the very first trial hearings on July 15, Ms. Tymoshenko was denied this basic right.

The judge began the proceedings without asking her legal team to enter. As she rose to protest this action, she was interrupted by the judge and forced to leave the hearings "for violation of court proceedings".

The proceedings then continued without her, and she was deprived of even the right to defend herself against charges.

This type of disregard of her basic rights is simply unacceptable.

The Criminal Code of Ukraine also states that the judge must ensure both the prosecution and the defence have adequate time to review evidence and prepare for court proceedings. The materials in the case against Ms. Tymoshenko, collected from pretrial investigation, amounted to approximately 5,000 pages. Her defence team was given between two and three days to review the documents. This again appears to be a flagrant violation of the Constitution of Ukraine, the principles of the rule of law, and Ms. Tymoshenko's right to a fair and reasonable defence.

Ms. Tymoshenko's lawyers were also prevented from speaking with her after she was arrested on August 5, thereby preventing them from building or implementing any further measures for her legal defence.

I should add that I am not presuming guilt or innocence in this case, but rather expressing my serious concerns with the apparent glaring absence of due process and fairness in this trial.

Ukrainians and the Ukrainian diaspora around the globe are not pleased with the actions of their government. Ukrainians have always been freedom-loving people, and they have a strong democratic tradition.

We witnessed this seven years ago during the Orange Revolution, when Ukrainians took to the streets in droves to protest what they knew to be an unfair and undemocratic election. In fact, the origins of democratic principles in Ukraine date back to the early 18th century. In 1710, the first Constitution of Ukraine was written by Pylyp Orlyk, and in April 2010, the 300th anniversary of this constitution was celebrated. By comparison, at 144 years Canada is not a very old democracy; as a consequence, we as Canadians sometimes take for granted the freedoms and privileges, as well as the rights and responsibilities, of living in such a stable, safe and prosperous country.



Not all the peoples of the world are so fortunate. For many years the people of Ukraine lived under the oppressive tyranny of the former Soviet Empire and the oppression of the Nazis, and endured the senseless horror of the Holodomor genocide.

Today the people of Ukraine are striving to build a prosperous, robust and healthy democratic state. They can count on Canada to stand up for their freedom.

Our foreign policy is a principled one. It is rooted in the defence of human freedom and in those things that elevate us as human beings: freedom, democracy, human rights and the rule of law. We will not back down in defending and promoting these ideals for all nations and all peoples around the world.

Ukrainian Canadians have contributed much to our nation in all aspects of society, from the arts to politics and from business to sport. They have helped to build the Canada we know today, and we are all the better for it.

As Ukraine moves toward a free, open and just society, Canada will always be there to help. We will not turn a blind eye to the proceedings against Ms. Tymoshenko; our hope, however, is that our ideals, upon which our policies are based, will be shared by Ukraine.

We take comfort in the words of Ukrainian poet Taras Shevchenko, whose words provided the inspiration for Ukrainian independence:

Strive and you will triumph, for God is on your side. The rewards are glory, truth, and that most sacred of things, freedom.

• (2145)

[Translation]

**Ms. Alexandrine Latendresse (Louis-Saint-Laurent, NDP):** Mr. Chair, I would like to thank my hon. colleague for his speech.

Essentially, I would like to ask him the question I asked earlier of my colleague from British Columbia Southern Interior regarding younger Ukrainians.

What steps could Canada take to help the younger generations gain a better understanding of democracies abroad including western democracies, such as Canada's? Perhaps we could encourage young Ukrainians to come and study in Canada and see what could be done to improve democracy in their own country when they return.

**Hon. Laurie Hawn:** Mr. Chair, I would like to thank my colleague for her question.

[English]

We have a Ukrainian intern in my office right now, Oleksandr. Perhaps my colleague has one as well. There are a number of them here. We hope they will learn from what they see here. For all that we may bicker in the House, back and forth about a variety of things, we are a model of co-operation and democracy for people around the world.

In fact, my colleague and her colleagues across the way have had their own orange revolution recently in Canada, and we congratulate them on their success.

That is something from which we can learn. We may disagree on things, but there are the basic principles of democracy and the basic principles of people making the difference, people of all ages, and it

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does come from young people. I am clearly in the second half of my life. My colleague is clearly hardly into the first half of her life, and we do count on young people. We do count on younger members of Parliament to lead by example and we want to pass on that example to young people from places like Ukraine to follow our example. They have been at it longer than we have, but we have something to offer and I believe my colleague recognizes that.

**Mrs. Stella Ambler (Mississauga South, CPC):** Mr. Chair, I would like to ask my colleague about the long term affects on democratic development in the Ukraine. I would like to ask his view on what the situation is now and how he feels it will impact the development of democracy in the Ukraine.

• (2150)

**Hon. Laurie Hawn:** Mr. Chair, that is a very important question.

Every developing country goes through challenges. Every developed country goes through challenges. We can learn from those situations and challenges. Where we have setbacks, that is an opportunity for progress.

I optimistically look at this in Ukraine as an opportunity for progress. Clearly the government has violated some of the principles and values that we hold dear such as freedom, democracy, human rights and the rule of law, but that awakens in people like Ukrainians the spirit of independence, the spirit of freedom, the kind of spirit we saw several years ago with their Orange Revolution.

The kind of spirit I see in Ukraine is in my own riding. I have a large Ukrainian population in my riding. I take inspiration from them often about their zest for life, their sense of vigour and their thirst for freedom and democracy. Canadian Ukrainians can help in the struggle of Ukrainians in the Ukraine.

I look at a situation like this, as I said, as an opportunity for Canadians of any stripe, but for Ukrainians in particular, to help those Ukrainians in Ukraine to make progress and to turn a bad situation into an opportunity for advancement.

[Translation]

**Mrs. Anne-Marie Day (Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles, NDP):** Mr. Chair, the government argues that a free trade agreement with Ukraine would coincide with Canada's foreign policy objectives, which support the democratic transformation and economic reforms undertaken by Ukraine.

In what way do negotiations on free trade support democratic transformation if we observe that there is increased repression of opposition policy?

[English]

**Hon. Laurie Hawn:** Mr. Chair, Canada will always be a friend of Ukraine and vice-versa. People who trade together do not tend to fight each other. That is a basic principle of trade. It is not just about economic prosperity. It is about foreign relations. It is about relations between two countries like Canada and Ukraine, like Canada and many other countries. Trade is a foundation upon which we can help Ukraine to build its economy and its prosperity. Prosperous people tend to be less cranky than people who are not prosperous.

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Anything we can do through our free trade agreements to help the Ukrainian economy to prosper will help the Ukrainian people to be more comfortable and to have a brighter future. That is our aim in all this process.

**Hon. Irwin Cotler (Mount Royal, Lib.):** Mr. Chair, I am delighted to participate in this take note debate, that the House take note of the general state of democracy in Ukraine, particularly the apparent political bias and arbitrary prosecution and conviction of former Prime Minister Yulia Tymoshenko by Ukrainian authorities.

Twenty-five years ago, Ukraine voted to leave the Soviet Union and became an independent country. Canada was the first western country to recognize the Ukraine's independence, establishing diplomatic relations on January 27, 1992, and the march to political and economic reform, independence, culture and identity began.

Seven years ago, the 2004 Orange Revolution gave Canada and the world great hope for the prospects of democracy and freedom in Ukraine. Seven years ago, Yulia Tymoshenko, the populist democrat dressed in orange, climbed on to a stage in a snow-covered Kiev. I still recall that scene when she electrified a crowd, galvanized some 150,000 protesters at the time against the then rigged election victory of Viktor Yanukovich in the 2004 presidential election.

Who could forget the compelling scenes, and I can still see it in my mind's eye? I am sure many in Canada at that time were engaged in what was happening in Ukraine. Who could forget the compelling scenes of Yulia Tymoshenko emerging, energizing, captivating the people for days, ushering Viktor Yushchenko to victory, proclaiming in her words at the time, "Glory to the Ukraine" and the crowd responding, "Yulia, Yulia".

The Liberal government at the time stood shoulder to shoulder with the Ukrainian diaspora in Canada and we stood shoulder to shoulder with the Ukrainian people in the Ukraine in our shared struggle to realize their democratic aspirations.

The Canadian government at the time, of which I was a member, sent 1,000 election observers to the Ukraine during the election and expressed support for the emergent government and democratic cause.

Democracy was on the march. Civil society was beginning to flower. Freedom of the press was a democratic expression of this march of freedom at the time.

The Orange Revolution gave the world hope for the prospect of real democracy taking root in the Ukraine with the clear and unequivocal support of the Ukrainian people. As well, the years that followed, and indeed we saw this, the emergence of a democracy, while somewhat chaotic, emerged and anchored in the people.

To fast forward, despite his history, Viktor Yanukovich won the 2010 presidential election, ironically, through open processes that resulted from the Orange Revolution itself. Canada and the western countries congratulated him and expressed interest in working with his government in its goal of joining the European Union and the western community of democratic nations.

Then, regrettably, the erosion of democracy, of which this debate is taking note, began and in that erosion of democracy there were a

litany of events that I will briefly summarize. Much of this has been addressed this evening, so I will deal with it by abbreviation only.

First, we had a series of unconstitutional amendments, where the previous restrictions to the power of the president were repealed, accelerating the concentration of power in the president. Distinctions and separation of power between president, prime minister and government were effectively nullified and the government and the Parliament came under the direct control of the president, so that whatever prior checks and balances occurred were no longer effective.

● (2155)

Second, we saw a process of politically motivated selected justice and repression of opposition politicians. This has been manifested in the ongoing prosecution and recent conviction of former prime minister Yulia Tymoshenko, as has been described this evening and is part of our take note debate theme. However, it includes as well the arrest and imprisonment of former interior minister, Yuriy Lutsenko and flight into asylum in the Czech Republic of former economic minister, Bohdan Danylyshyn, among others. The appointment of media magnate, Valeriy Khoroshkovsky, as head of the security service of Ukraine, is part of a pattern as it has been described as turning the power of the state over to business oligarchy.

Third, the European parliament adopted, on June 7, 2011, a resolution on the Ukraine, wherein it stressed the importance of and its concern with the absence of transparency in investigations, prosecutions, trials and accountability and warned against any use of the criminal law as a tool to achieve political end. It further expressed concern about the increase in the selective prosecution of the political opposition in Ukraine. As I said, this is not limited to, though of course the case study this evening is that of Yulia Tymoshenko.

The European resolution goes on to stress that the ongoing investigations of prominent Ukrainian political leaders should not preclude them, as it has, from actively participating in the political life of the country and calls on Ukrainian authorities to lift the travel ban, both domestically and internationally, on Yulia Tymoshenko and other key political figures.

As well, there were threats to media freedoms, for one of the great achievements of the 2004 Orange Revolution was the establishment of a truly independent media. Again, since February 2010, a growing number of disturbing incidents has occurred that conveyed the impression that media freedoms are increasingly being jeopardized. During its fact finding mission to the Ukraine in July 2010, the international media watch dog, Reporters Without Borders, documented cases of physical attacks on journalists, direct obstruction of their work and acts of censorship of various kinds. This trend has continued. At least 10 radio, television and newspaper journalists across the country have reported being physically attacked in 2010 in cities throughout Ukraine, a pattern continuing in 2011. Broadcast licences of independent television channels have been suspended by government regulators, and I can go on.



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With regard to local elections, according to the U.S. State Department 2010 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices in Ukraine, the October 31 local elections at the time did not meet standards for openness and fairness set by the presidential elections earlier in the year. Two American NGOs threatened to withdraw from a working group to develop a new electoral law, charging that the group had no input because decisions were being made and controlled by the president.

In addition, there is growing and serious concern with the upcoming parliamentary elections. How can they be declared free and fair if the leaders of two opposition parties, including the leader of the official opposition, are not able to participate?

Finally, I would mention the fact that the government of President Viktor Yanukovych has targeted independent universities and research institutions for harassment and intimidation, especially those who are working on restoring Ukraine's historic memory.

This brings me, at this point, to the trial of former prime minister Yulia Tymoshenko. In this trial, we see a case study of that which is concerning us with respect to the erosion of democracy in Ukraine as a whole. In fact, the images contrasted with that which I mentioned of the Orange Revolution in 2004.

I will close with this from an article which states:

This time the former prime minister, wearing grey, sat in court to hear a...judge reading out a sentence of seven years' jail, a three-year ban on public office and a fine of \$190 m as purported compensation for damage allegedly caused when she struck a gas deal with Russia in 2009.

This was during the normal course of her work. The article continues to state:

The term was symbolic: a year in jail for every one that has passed since the orange revolution.

A case study in selective prosecution, in all the arbitrariness that attended it, in the denial of a right to fair trial before an impartial and independent judiciary, in the denial of the right to know the nature of the charges against her, denial of the right to counsel, we have gone from the excitement of the 2004 Orange Revolution to the nadir that we are now witnessing in Ukraine.

● (2200)

[Translation]

**Mrs. Anne-Marie Day (Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles, NDP):** Mr. Chair, I thank my colleague for his remarks. I have a comment to make. I am quite pleased with the evening I have just spent in this House, which will continue until 10 p.m. or later. This evening, I observed that it is possible to move in the same direction and work together on both sides of the House. I also noted that there were several members of Ukrainian origin in this House, which I was unaware of until this evening. It would appear that our voices are united in our call for one thing: a better democracy in Ukraine. That was my comment.

**Hon. Irwin Cotler:** Mr. Chair, I agree. We can work together for the common cause of democracy in Ukraine, as we support this struggle for democracy. For my part, it is inspiring to see the members of every party in this House taking part in the struggle for democracy.

● (2205)

[English]

**Ms. Jinny Jogindera Sims (Newton—North Delta, NDP):** Mr. Chair, it is absolutely true that all parties are rowing in the same direction as we express our concern about the undermining of democratic structures in the Ukraine. As Canadians and as parliamentarians, we are also struggling with how to effectively influence and bring about change in the right direction.

If my colleague were in charge, what steps would he see the government taking in order to put pressure on the Ukrainian government to respect human rights and to respect the rule of law?

**Hon. Irwin Cotler:** Mr. Chair, first, Canada should use all of the diplomatic resources at our disposal to communicate both publicly and privately to the Ukraine our displeasure about the regressive developments that have been cited during the course of this debate this evening, and to put the Ukrainian government on notice that there will be adverse potential consequences for this anti-democratic conduct.

Second, we should help foster NGO sector development, particularly groups that are working there in human rights, education and law reform. Civil society in the Ukraine is still a powerful resource and we should stand in solidarity with it.

Third, government to government dialogue is necessary. We should send a Canadian parliamentary delegation to visit Ukraine to meet with our counterparts there and deliver the message of our standing with them in common cause as we deliver the message to the government that it will be held accountable for its actions.

We should engage in appropriate diplomatic interventions with respect to upcoming hearing, such as the Lusenko trial.

We should include human rights protection in free trade talks with the Ukraine.

We also should engage in robust election monitoring, particularly in the upcoming October 2012 parliamentary elections, and support the independent media in the Ukraine where there are significant threats to media treatment. We should perhaps consider reinstating Radio-Canada international Ukraine programming to ensure that our Canadian values are shared and broadcast in the Ukraine.

**Mrs. Stella Ambler (Mississauga South, CPC):** Mr. Chair, I will be splitting my time with the Minister of Citizenship, Immigration and Multiculturalism.

I am honoured to stand in the House tonight to speak to this important and troubling situation, but the words I have to offer are insignificant compared to the notable remarks made by Canada's Prime Minister on Friday night in his speech to the Ukrainian Canadian Congress in Toronto. I will take this opportunity to read into the record a portion of his remarks at this important event, which took place just a few days ago. Speaking of the Taras Shevchenko award, the Prime Minister stated:

This award has been presented to many distinguished Ukrainian-Canadians, as well as friends of Ukraine. Among those friends was John Diefenbaker, the first Prime Minister to receive it. I am honoured to follow in his footsteps ... for Diefenbaker personified the distinctly Canadian reality that people from all backgrounds can and do succeed in this great country.

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Of course, what really makes this presentation special is the fact it pays tribute to the legacy of Taras Shevchenko. His words provided the inspiration for Ukrainian independence. He said, and I quote: "Strive and you will triumph for God is on your side. The rewards are glory, truth, and that most sacred of things, freedom." Shevchenko was a brilliant artist and a renowned poet. But most important, his was a voice for freedom...

In the decades that followed his spirit would inspire Ukrainians to fight for liberty against not only the Tsars, but also the totalitarian ideologies of the Nazis and the Soviets. You know, here in Canada, with our deep Parliamentary traditions and our comparatively benign history, democracy sometimes gets taken for granted. We often need to be reminded of how long and hard the struggle for basic freedoms has been, and that it remains to be fought for so many of our fellow human beings. The Ukrainian-Canadian community has always provided that perspective and that voice for the oppressed...

But, the important thing is this, I'm here to tell you that as long as I am Prime Minister our government always will speak out for those things that elevate the human spirit—freedom, democracy, human rights, and the rule of law—for all nations and peoples! ...

—when I visited Ukraine last year I made a special point of visiting historic sites to pay my respects, on behalf of all Canadians...

While I was in Kiev, as you remember I also raised issues that are of concern to the Government of Canada. I took particular care to show Canada's support for democratic debate ... by meeting with Yulia Tymoshenko. Like many of you, I am seriously concerned about her situation...

I've written directly to President Yanukovich. I let him know that I am deeply concerned ... that the conduct of Tymoshenko's trial does not reflect accepted norms of due process or fairness.

Friends, we all know that a vigorous political opposition and judicial independence are vital to building a democratic and prosperous Ukraine. Canada will support Ukraine whenever it moves towards freedom, democracy and justice. However, our foreign policy is rooted in principle, and in the defence of freedom.

So to be clear, our government is very concerned about the path the Government of Ukraine appears to be taking. Tuesday's developments may have serious consequences for our bilateral relationship. The Ukrainian people can count on Canada to stand-up for their liberty. Canada is always ready to help ... to help democratic institutions take root, in Ukraine and around the world. And I know that each and every person here tonight shares that cause ... which is why I am so honoured to be here.

Thank you, Mr. Chair, for this opportunity to speak and tell you about the Prime Minister's comments on this serious and important situation.

● (2210)

**Hon. Laurie Hawn (Edmonton Centre, CPC):** Mr. Chair, I listened to my colleague's comments, which were very apropos.

Canada has always been a friend of Ukraine. We have always stood up for Ukraine. We were the first country to recognize it in 1991 when it regained its freedom and democracy. I would like to get my colleague's views and comments on the historic role that Canada has played with former Prime Minister Mulroney and other Canadian institutions have played a role in the re-emergence of Ukraine and how we can help them going forward from this setback to get back on the right track again.

**Mrs. Stella Ambler:** Mr. Chair, Canada has always supported the efforts in Ukraine to build a peaceful, democratic and prosperous society, and we will continue to do so.

My colleague, who was at the election in 2004 during the 10 days of the Orange Revolution, was telling me about those times and about the nascent democracy that was Ukraine seven years ago. Twenty years ago, the situation was even more difficult.

As the Prime Minister mentioned in his remarks on Friday night to the Canadian Ukrainian Congress in Toronto, our history is relatively

benign in that area. We did not go through the difficulties that the Ukraine did and has over the last many years.

Canada will continue to support Ukraine's development and democracy. We want to ensure this anti-democratic situation that is going on stops as soon as possible.

**Mr. Blaine Calkins (Wetaskiwin, CPC):** Mr. Chair, I am the chairman of the Canada Poland Parliamentary Friendship Group, and I see my colleague for Mississauga East—Cooksville here as well. I can say, from the Polish diaspora who contact me and from the large Ukrainian diaspora who live in my constituency, that they are quite concerned and alarmed. I also know that the people of Poland are quite concerned and alarmed about the developments that have taken place and with Ukraine slipping in recent years, since the last election, to the influence from the former Soviet regime that is now manifesting itself again in the politics of Ukraine.

I know that my colleague from Mississauga South does have both a large Polish and Ukrainian constituency that she represents. I wonder if she would elaborate on some of the comments that she has been hearing from those constituents.

● (2215)

**Mrs. Stella Ambler:** Mr. Chair, indeed, the residents of Mississauga South who are Ukrainian Canadians are very concerned about this politically motivated persecution of Yulia Tymoshenko. They are relieved that the Canadian Parliament and Canada's Prime Minister are taking a tough stand against the erosion of democratic rights in Ukraine.

I have spoken to some of them and they are very proud as well that our Prime Minister was given the honour of the Taras Shevchenko medal, the highest honour that can be bestowed by the Ukrainian community on any Canadian. In fact, only two prime ministers in history, the current Prime Minister and Prime Minister Diefenbaker, have been given that award.

We will continue to work on behalf of Ukrainian Canadians living here in Canada, but also to ensure that democracy, freedom, democratic rights and the rule of law return to Ukraine.

[Translation]

**Ms. Alexandrine Latendresse (Louis-Saint-Laurent, NDP):** Mr. Chair, there are a number of reasons why I am pleased to speak today about the events that have taken place in Ukraine since the beginning of August.

First of all, my reasons are personal. I will come to the point:

[Member spoke in Ukrainian.]

[English]

I love Ukraine.



It is a magnificent country with extraordinary people. The people are talented and courageous. The history of Ukraine is a series of incredible, tragic and grand events. It is a country of great poets, courageous warriors, tiny grandmothers who gather mushrooms, and dedicated workers who are proud of their country. When the train makes its way through the hills that are yellow with sunflowers, a sense of happiness falls on the traveller, like that experienced in childhood. Those who come into contact with Ukraine fall under its spell forever.

I have wonderful memories of Ukraine and I am filled with nostalgia when I think of the time I spent there.

This personal relationship echoes a much deeper and older relationship that all honourable members of the House are surely familiar with. Canada has a very close relationship with the Ukrainian people, which has spanned more than 100 years. How many millions of Ukrainian immigrants arrived in the Prairies at the beginning of the 20th century? So many came that we are almost justified in calling Canada “the little Ukraine”, or “*Malaukraïna*”. How many older Canadians still remember their grandparents from Galicia living in conditions of extreme poverty? How many younger people still call their grandmother “Baba”? How many of our elected officials were and are of Ukrainian descent?

The numbers speak for themselves. With the exception of Russia and the other former Soviet countries, Canada has the largest Ukrainian population in the world. That is saying something.

In late 2004, we all saw thousands of people gathered in Independence Square in Kiev demanding the annulment of the fraudulent results of the presidential election. We remember President Yushchenko, disfigured by an attempt to poison him, losing the presidential race. The election irregularities were as clear as the sky is blue: ballot tampering, fraud, abuse and cynicism unlike any that Canada will ever see, fortunately.

Cynicism was an acquired habit that expressed itself automatically. It was nothing new. Almost all the former Soviet republics had a great deal of difficulty instituting true democratic reform. All the experts were saying that it was a Soviet legacy, that it was inevitable, that the old habits and old traps of an era had left too great a mark, and that it was sad but that we had to respect the political reality and not judge it.

But this underestimated the Ukrainians. The events that followed were extraordinary. Protestors stood their ground for weeks. In the cold, the wind and the snow, they stayed there, refusing to let their country be betrayed again. And to everyone's surprise, in the end, it worked. With key slogans, orange flags and courage, thousands of outraged citizens got the better of a quasi-criminal and undemocratic administration. The Cossack nation's unbelievable history was unfolding before our eyes. It was what everyone now refers to as the Orange Revolution.

It was during this Orange Revolution that the main subject of tonight's debate appeared on the scene. I remember it well. For the rest of Europe, it was as though she had fallen from heaven. Yulia Tymoshenko climbed up on the barricades and spoke on behalf of Ukrainians. With her symbolic braid, she resembles the poet Lesya

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Ukrainka. She expresses herself beautifully in Ukrainian and fires everyone's imagination.

Yulia Tymoshenko would become the great heroine of a country that no longer wanted to be forgotten by the western world. I remember seeing posters of Yulia looking like Joan of Arc in the souvenir markets in Kiev and Odessa. This can be regarded as either an exaggeration or a valid metaphor; we can take our pick. However, we cannot deny the fact that this woman represented an important symbol for her people.

Yulia quickly positioned herself in the Ukraine's new democratic government, which saw the light of day following the victory of the orange protestors. She had an unbelievable talent for politics. Suddenly, she was everywhere. Just as quickly, she became the one and only way to a democratic, prosperous and stable European Ukraine. This is what the country had always aspired to and, with Yulia Tymoshenko, it was closer to achieving that goal than ever before. This was the main thrust of her election platform and she would never change it.

But, the Ukraine is a huge and diverse country. Its population is enormous: close to 46 million. Its transition toward the market system has been difficult and the disappearance of the Soviet state left large portions of the country in poverty. We are talking here about conditions that are very difficult to manage. And, for the first time, it seemed that there was real hope.

But the election results revealed and confirmed a fear. Although it has a united national identity, the country seems divided in half along the Dnieper. One the one side is a majority of pro-Europe, pro-democracy and pro-reform voters, and on the other side are the more conservative voters, who still hold onto cultural ties with Russia and who live in a working class area nostalgic for industrial Sovietism.

• (2220)

Bringing together this big beautiful country requires ongoing efforts. In 2010, the candidate from the left bank of the Dnieper was elected. Viktor Yanukovich won the prime ministerial election by a very small margin. And his election immediately undermined the progress made since the fall of 2004. All of the real democratic reforms were put on hold.

Of course, he claimed to be a reformed and reliable democrat to the western world and carried on with the European agenda. He even chose Brussels over Moscow when the time came for his first official visit abroad. Furthermore, the electoral irregularities were so minimal that foreign leaders were forced to acknowledge the validity of the election. But reality was quite different. The Ukrainian government seemed to be taking a much different path.

On August 5, former presidential candidate Yulia Volodimirivna Tymoshenko was formally accused and arrested. A bit earlier, she had responded to her accusers and addressed the nation on television and the Internet, proclaiming her innocence loud and clear: “I did not steal the money I am accused of taking.” She immediately indicated that the accusations against her were motivated by simple political revenge. No one, anywhere, has refuted that statement.

### *Government Orders*

Worse yet, President Yanukovich does not really deny it. After all, under the Soviet regime, it was quite normal to lose one's good name for nothing. This entire legal charade is the same old, same old. Without any valid reason whatsoever, as though they were still in the U.S.S.R., once it achieved power, the regime took revenge on its detractors.

I repeat: someone did try to take the life of Viktor Yushchenko during the 2004 election. Now the regime prefers to throw its opponents into prison. It is getting soft.

Nonetheless, this goes beyond simple vengeance. It is a pure and simple repression of opposition. Today the people's committee opposed to Yanukovich said, "It is an attempt to exterminate the opposition, and resistance to democracy the world over. This show trial is not just the trial of Yulia Tymoshenko, but also that of the Ukrainian government. It no longer has a place in the civilized world. Such brutality is an impediment and it must be defeated".

After all, that is what this trial was: a show trial, like those under Stalin; less brutal, but heir to a tradition founded on illegitimacy and violence. Ukraine deserves better. Ukraine, as I know it, deserves better and, with a little help, will be better.

Fortunately, the rest of the world is reacting to the situation. The European Union and especially Poland are expressing their fears quite well. Poland is the country working the hardest on helping Belarus and Ukraine complete the transition to democracy. President Komorowski is considering diplomatic sanctions against the Yanukovich government. Ukraine's European future is seriously compromised. If Poland is taking action, then Canada has a duty to follow suit.

Ukraine is a rich country with an intelligent, educated and talented population. Its people are dynamic, young and full of ambition. I have a number of friends in Ukraine, people who live as though these underhanded practices did not exist. They have no choice. To them, the path Ukraine must take is clear. Ukraine is a European country, the largest European country in fact. Ukraine is a country with an abundance of resources of all kinds. If Europe loses Ukraine it is a catastrophe. If this great country falls to dictatorship, it is a tragedy.

If we have to add human rights protection clauses in our agreements with this government, then let us do so. If Poland, which has been working so hard for such a long time on integrating Ukraine into Europe, does not hesitate to take action, then it is a fine example and we should follow it.

The efforts Canada has made through CIDA are commendable. Our country has truly understood that we have much to gain from getting to know the Ukrainians and helping them develop their country. A stable, developed Ukraine is something positive for the whole world.

We cannot forget that the Ukrainian people are innocent bystanders in these schemes. We need to think of them first. Ukrainians should have greater access to travel in Europe and the west in general. They need to see the validity of their efforts in the fight for democracy. The dream of a stable, democratic Ukraine needs to be given a chance. To quote Yulia Tymoshenko, "*Razom peremojemo!*" Together, we can overcome!

We must think about Ukrainian youth. We need to let them come study here. We need to show them something other than the universities in their country and in the former Soviet republics that they have access to. We need to wager that in 25 years, if an entire generation of Ukrainian youth has the Canadian education system opened to them, the errors that led to this sad situation will not be repeated. Everyone wins. It is simple: "*Razom peremojemo!*"

To conclude, I would like to read a few lines from a letter that Yulia Tymoshenko wrote during her trial and was able to get out to journalists, "The courage and unity of honest people are what frightens dictators the most. And, at the end of the day, that is what topples oppressive regimes."

*Slava Ukraïni!*

• (2225)

[English]

**Ms. Jinny Jogindera Sims (Newton—North Delta, NDP):** Mr. Chair, I would like to thank my colleague for her heartfelt and very passionate speech on the situation in Ukraine. As I said earlier, rarely in the House do we see parliamentarians from both sides of the House speaking up on such a critical issue and, as someone said previously, rowing in the same direction.

My colleague has had the pleasure of travelling in Ukraine and has made some personal connections. The Prime Minister has made a very strong statement. The Minister of Foreign Affairs has also spoken very strongly and hinted at bilateral relations being in jeopardy. What other steps does my colleague think Canada could be taking in order to promote democratic structures in Ukraine?

[Translation]

**Ms. Alexandrine Latendresse:** Mr. Chair, I thank my hon. colleague for the question. As several members have already said, there are various things Canada can do through its free trade agreements. It is extremely important for Canada to respect human rights and the separation of the judiciary and the executive. There are many things we can do to help the people. The people who want things to change want democracy, and we can support them in their fight for a freer and more democratic Ukraine. There are plenty of things we can do in that regard. For instance, we can encourage students, young people, to learn more about western countries like Canada. The various programs that invite Ukrainian students to come to our Parliament are an extraordinary way to help them learn about our democratic system and our country's institutions. These are excellent ways to help democracy in Ukraine.

• (2230)

**The Deputy Chair:** It being 10:30 p.m., pursuant to Standing Order 53(1), the committee will rise and I will leave the chair.



*Government Orders*

(Government Business No. 6 reported)

[English]

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Barry Devolin):** This House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 2 p.m., pursuant to Standing Order 24(1).

(The House adjourned at 10:30 p.m.)

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# House of Commons Debates

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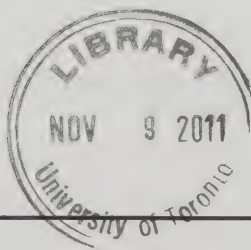
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OFFICIAL REPORT  
(HANSARD)

Wednesday, October 19, 2011

Speaker: The Honourable Andrew Scheer



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# HOUSE OF COMMONS

Wednesday, October 19, 2011

The House met at 2 p.m.

[Translation]

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## Prayers

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• (1405)

[English]

**The Speaker:** It being Wednesday, we will now have the singing of the national anthem led by the hon. member for Sydney—Victoria.

[Members sang the national anthem]

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## STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

[English]

### SUPREME COURT CANDIDATES

**Mr. Brent Rathgeber (Edmonton—St. Albert, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, legal history will be made this afternoon. Two exemplary jurists, Justice Andromache Karakatsanis and Justice Michael Moldaver, will appear before a parliamentary committee to answer questions from members of Parliament concerning their abilities to serve on our country's highest court. This meeting marks the completion of an extensive consultative process to find the most qualified candidates and capable jurists to join the Supreme Court of Canada.

I was honoured to be chosen from among my caucus colleagues to serve as one of five members of the Supreme Court selection panel. The committee spent more than two months reviewing judgments by the prospective candidates and consulting prominent members of Ontario's legal community in order to come up with a short list. In the end, the panel's decision was unanimous. I believe both candidates are exceptional choices to fill the Supreme Court justice vacancies and will uphold the world-class reputation and historic legacy of the Supreme Court of Canada.

Of all my parliamentary duties, I consider having had input into the composition of the Supreme Court to have been the most interesting and most purposeful of my tasks.

### CONSERVATIVE GOVERNMENT

**Mr. José Nunez-Melo (Laval, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, in this short statement, I wanted to talk about something positive and extraordinary in my riding of Laval. However, in seeing what has been going on in the House in recent weeks, I have been dismayed at the attitude of the Conservative caucus, which is trying to push through old bills that were not passed in previous parliaments and that are proof of its bad faith. The Conservative caucus—the government—is desperate and determined to laugh in Canadians' faces. This is a rather awkward display of what it means to have a majority government.

I remind this caucus that Canadians are not stupid. They can understand, hear and grasp what is going on. We will remember. The Conservatives should take advantage of the time they have. The NDP is a government in waiting. It will show the Conservatives the door, as it did with the Liberals and the Bloc Québécois.

\* \* \*

[English]

### VANCOUVER'S CHINATOWN

**Ms. Wai Young (Vancouver South, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, last week residents from across Vancouver joined the Chinese community from across Canada to celebrate the recognition of Vancouver's Chinatown as a national historic site of Canada. I was honoured to join my colleagues, the Minister of the Environment, the Minister of Citizenship, Immigration and Multiculturalism and the Minister of State for Seniors, in making the official announcement.

Vancouver's Chinatown is not only a sought after tourist destination, it also has been and continues to be home to new immigrants seeking a better life for themselves and their families. Vancouver's Chinatown is a powerful symbol of the combined hopes, dreams and aspirations of generations of Chinese migrants who have contributed immensely to our country's profound cultural mosaic.

This designation is an honour for the many pioneers of Chinatown, the people of Vancouver and the Chinese community across Canada. It is a historic recognition as well as a celebration of the struggles and achievements of the Chinese people in Canada.

*Statements by Members***BAY OF FUNDY**

**Hon. Dominic LeBlanc (Beauséjour, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, there are only 22 days left for people to vote for the Bay of Fundy as one of the new seven wonders of nature.

[Translation]

The Bay of Fundy is best known for its high tides, the highest in the world, which allow people to go kayaking or walk on the ocean floor. These tides do more than attract tourists; they also represent tremendous potential for renewable energy.

[English]

People from around the world come to New Brunswick and Nova Scotia to take in the breathtaking experience of the Bay of Fundy. Whether it be the powerful tides, the impressive whales or the fossils along its banks, the Bay of Fundy offers unique adventures for everyone.

[Translation]

As this is the last chance for Canada to be recognized as having one of the new seven wonders of the world, I encourage all Canadians to vote for the Bay of Fundy.

[English]

I urge everyone to visit the votemyfundy.com website and vote to help this magic area of New Brunswick and Nova Scotia get the recognition it deserves.

\* \* \*

**NEW BRUNSWICK SOUTHWEST**

**Mr. John Williamson (New Brunswick Southwest, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, it is a great privilege to address the chamber. I will endeavour to honour and respect it throughout my time in this place. My congratulations to you, young sir, on your election as Speaker, and to all hon. colleagues.

I am proud to serve with the Prime Minister, whose achievements have recently earned him the trust of Canadians.

I am both grateful and humbled to have received the confidence of the people of New Brunswick Southwest and will devote my time here to advancing their interests. In that pursuit, I have a great example to guide me.

My predecessor, the hon. Greg Thompson, was a credit to our noble calling. His relentless efforts on behalf of the people of New Brunswick Southwest achieved real results for my constituency, my province and my country.

A tribute dinner will take place for Greg on Saturday, October 22 at the Algonquin Hotel in Saint Andrew's, New Brunswick where Greg and his wife will be honoured for their many years of public service.

\* \* \*

● (1410)

**DELVIEW SECONDARY SCHOOL**

**Ms. Jinny Jogindera Sims (Newton—North Delta, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I rise today to acknowledge an exceptional group of young people from my riding of Newton—North Delta. On October 13,

students at Delview Secondary School organized a massive food drive called "Thanks 4 Giving". Over 400 students collected nearly 15,000 cans of food from and for our community, and items continue to pour in every day. The food will be donated to Deltassist and the Surrey Food Bank Society.

In these challenging economic times it is imperative for government to address the growing issues of poverty that are plaguing our communities across the country, where too many people are without jobs, affordable housing and a decent standard of living.

I want to take this opportunity to acknowledge the community spirit, teamwork and generosity of the staff, parents, students and constituents who have collected food outside school hours for those people in dire need.

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**SUNCOR ENERGY INC.**

**Mr. Brian Jean (Fort McMurray—Athabasca, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I rise to talk about a Canadian success story that will make every Canadian proud. It is a story about Suncor Energy Inc.

This year Suncor Energy Inc. won the 2011 Emerald Challenge Award. The award recognizes environmental excellence and leadership relating to activities occurring in Canada's oil sands. It demonstrates Suncor's investments in technologies that help advance its environmental performance and reduce our environmental footprint. This new approach has already enabled Suncor to cancel plans for five additional tailing ponds. That is only the beginning. The company expects a rapid restoration of natural habitats as it helps reduce the number of tailing ponds from eight to one at its current mine site. This new approach will allow it to reclaim entire mine sites up to 70% faster.

Today I recognize the great accomplishments of Suncor and its management team. I believe this is the beginning of a better future for the Canadian environment and is in the best interests of Canada.

\* \* \*

**BAY OF FUNDY**

**Mr. Rodney Weston (Saint John, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I rise today to promote one of the natural wonders of our country, the Bay of Fundy. The tides of the Bay of Fundy are the highest in the world. It is an area that has proven to be an endless source of opportunities and motivation for all.

Given the importance and greatness of this area, it is not surprising that the Bay of Fundy is a prime candidate for becoming one of the new seven wonders of nature. When this campaign started in 2007, the Bay of Fundy was one of 441 entries worldwide vying for this distinction. It is now one of 28 remaining candidates and the only one from Canada.

Please help the Bay of Fundy, a true Canadian icon, reach the dream of becoming one of the new seven wonders of nature. Voting can be done by visiting [www.votemyfundy.com](http://www.votemyfundy.com) or by texting the word "FUNDY" to 77077.



I encourage all members of Parliament to proudly display the Bay of Fundy pin to help promote this wonderful effort. Most important, I encourage them to vote for the Bay of Fundy.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

#### RIDING OF SAINT-BRUNO—SAINT-HUBERT

**Mrs. Djaouida Sellah (Saint-Bruno—Saint-Hubert, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to talk about a great man who visited my riding. Gilbert Gilles Boulanger, a gunner in the second world war, was in my riding to lend his support to the Fondation Aérovision de Saint-Hubert. Mr. Boulanger piloted a CF-18 at the age of 88 and overcame cancer. At the age of 90, he is still passionate about flying.

I am also pleased to rise in the House to congratulate the 800 students at the Pensionnat des Sacrés-Coeurs de Saint-Bruno who celebrated the International Day of Peace in their own special way. They gave me a box of letters and drawings to give to the Prime Minister.

I would like to congratulate the students, teachers and leaders for taking the time and the initiative to promote peace. I would like to share with the House the message that they sent to me: "Peace, peace, we want peace! Here, there, now!"

\* \* \*

• (1415)

[English]

#### ROGERS COMMUNICATIONS

**Mr. James Rajotte (Edmonton—Leduc, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to congratulate Rogers Communications today as it celebrates 50 years of pioneering success.

In 1960, Ted Rogers took the first of many risks and signed his name to an \$85,000 loan to purchase a fledgling FM radio station.

In the late 1960s, Rogers Cable TV was launched with a mere 300 subscribers.

In the 1980s, when few could foresee a wireless future, Ted Rogers made a big bet by investing millions to help build one of Canada's first wireless networks.

Before he passed away in 2008, Ted had built a telecommunications and media powerhouse. His company has grown from a small group of visionaries into a pillar of Canadian business.

On behalf of the Conservative caucus, I wish to congratulate Rogers Communications on 50 years of relentless pursuit of a dream.

I close today with the signature closing Ted used in every single speech and which continues to be Rogers Communications' unofficial motto, "The best is yet to come".

\* \* \*

[Translation]

#### STATUS OF WOMEN

**Ms. Lise St-Denis (Saint-Maurice—Champlain, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, despite the women's liberation movement of the 1960s, the primary responsibility for raising children still lies with women in

#### Statements by Members

Canadian families. That is why I wish to point out to all members, in all parties of this House, just how difficult it can be for women to find a positive work-life balance.

Our parliamentary procedures are outdated and should reflect the social realities of the 21st century. It is our duty to reform our procedures and institutions in order to allow the women of this House to find a positive work-life balance. Similarly, fathers who sit in this House and members who come from remote areas are certainly aware of the realities of parliamentary life that force many women to choose between their political careers and a balanced family life. The women of this House are vital to the functioning of our democratic institutions.

\* \* \*

[English]

#### WOMEN IN CANADIAN MILITARY FORCES

**Mrs. Tilly O'Neill Gordon (Miramichi, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, October is Women's History Month in Canada. This year's theme, Women in Canadian Military Forces: A Proud Legacy, highlights the important contributions of women to the Canadian military forces throughout Canada's history.

It is an ideal time to learn about the work of outstanding women who serve and protect Canada and Canadians through key roles in the Royal Canadian Navy, the Canadian Army and the Royal Canadian Air Force.

Women such as Elizabeth Gregory MacGill, the first woman aircraft designer in the world, Josée Kurtz, the first woman to command a warship, and Marie Louise Fish, the first woman to serve as a naval officer at sea, are inspiring leaders. Their milestone achievements helped pave the way for women in the Canadian military.

On behalf of all Canadians, we thank them for being an important part of our national military history.

\* \* \*

#### HUMAN RIGHTS

**Hon. Irwin Cotler (Mount Royal, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I recently participated in the first-ever Global Summit Against Persecution and Discrimination, which brought together former political prisoners, dissidents, victims of torture and discrimination, some of whom I represent. They unanimously adopted the landmark Declaration of Dissidents for Universal Human Rights. It is a clarion call by these heroes of human rights to hold their perpetrators to account, and includes the following initiatives: an action plan for Canada and the international community to combat the culture of impunity at the United Nations; adoption of resolutions holding country violators to account, such as the one presented yesterday by United Nations Watch and a coalition of dissidents condemning Syria's mass killings and calling also for the release of political prisoners, including Chinese Nobel Peace Prize laureate Liu Xiaobo; and the formation of an interparliamentary group for human rights in Iran to promote and protect the cause of Iranian human rights as a priority on both the national and international agendas.

*Oral Questions***UKRAINE**

**Mr. Ted Opitz (Etobicoke Centre, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, our government took the initiative this week to have a debate on the situation in Ukraine to voice concerns over the Yulia Tymoshenko verdict. We did what was right, and the Ukrainian Canadian Congress agrees. It said that our government is taking the bold and important step of holding a debate on the Tymoshenko trial.

Our government is deeply concerned by the situation in Ukraine. One cannot forget what a good friend Canada has been to Ukraine, the ancestral homeland of 1.2 million Canadians.

Since 2006 our government has recognized Holodomor Memorial Day, supported democratic reforms in Ukraine, expressed Canada's commitment to the support for human rights, democratic development and free and fair elections in Ukraine, entered into historic free trade negotiations with Ukraine in 2010, and so much more.

Our government has been a friend of a free and democratic Ukraine. We hope freedom and democracy are vital parts of Ukraine's future.

\* \* \*

• (1420)

**ROGERS COMMUNICATIONS**

**Mr. Brian Masse (Windsor West, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise to congratulate Rogers Communications on 50 years of driving Canadian innovation.

It was Ted Rogers' father who invented the world's first batteryless radio. Little could he have imagined the firsts his son would go on to pioneer in the decades ahead.

In the early 1990s, Rogers was the first in North America to launch digital cellular. Not long after that, it was the first to pioneer hi-speed home Internet. More recently it was the first in Canada to launch a next generation LTE wireless network.

Rogers employs more than 30,000 Canadians in high-value jobs and provides almost one in three Canadians with the services Canadians need to connect with the world around them.

Each year Rogers invests billions of dollars in its networks. It is among the top R and D spenders in Canada. It increased its research and development budget through the recent economic downturn.

The New Democrats, the official opposition, offer our congratulations as Rogers celebrates this impressive milestone. We look forward to the future of even more exciting Canadian innovation.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

**NEW DEMOCRATIC PARTY**

**Mr. Jacques Gourde (Lotbinière—Chutes-de-la-Chaudière, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, it seems that a former New Democrat MP is teaching the new NDP MPs in this House the art of obstruction, time-wasting and impertinence, and all with a view to obstructing the democratic process. The most disappointing thing is that this type of tactic is being used by a party that promised to promote decorum in the House of Commons.

The hon. member for Vancouver East used to criticize these tactics in committee, calling them mean-spirited, vindictive and anti-democratic. The hon. member for Winnipeg Centre described this type of strategy in committee as a way of heading toward a constitutional crisis. Their House leader refuses to comment and, with such tactics, we can see why.

The new NDP MPs did not come to Ottawa to play these dirty games. They should rise up against these tactics and help our Conservative government deliver the goods for Canadians.

**ORAL QUESTIONS**

[Translation]

**CANADIAN WHEAT BOARD**

**Mrs. Nycole Turmel (Hull—Aylmer, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, the Conservatives are ignoring the needs of Prairie farmers by dismantling the Canadian Wheat Board even though that is not what they want. Farmers made it clear: they want to keep the Canadian Wheat Board. But the Conservatives are refusing to listen. They are refusing to accept the results of the referendum on the Canadian Wheat Board.

Why dismantle the Canadian Wheat Board even though that is not what farmers want?

**Right Hon. Stephen Harper (Prime Minister, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, western farmers have been speaking with a strong voice for a long time.

[English]

Western Canadian farmers have long been looking for the freedom to market their grain, just like farmers in Quebec and other parts of eastern Canada have. We are going to give them that freedom.

**Mrs. Nycole Turmel (Hull—Aylmer, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, here is what the law says:

The Minister shall not cause to be introduced in Parliament a bill that would exclude any kind, type, class or grade of wheat or barley...unless

(a) the Minister has consulted with the board...; and

(b) the producers of the grain have voted in favour of the exclusion or extension...

That is the law of the land. Why will the Prime Minister not respect the law, respect the producers and keep the Canadian Wheat Board in place?

**Right Hon. Stephen Harper (Prime Minister, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the law of our constitutional system is extremely clear. A previous government cannot bind a future government to its policy. This government received a mandate from western Canadian farmers, who did not vote for that party or anyone over there, to make sure that these people have the freedom that other people in this country have long taken for granted, and we are going to give it to them because that is what they want us to do.



● (1425)

**Mrs. Nycole Turmel (Hull—Aylmer, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister seems to have forgotten about the law and order government. I just read the law to the Prime Minister. It says that the minister shall not cause to be introduced in Parliament a bill impacting the Wheat Board's mandate unless the producers have voted in favour of these changes. It has not happened.

Why will the Prime Minister not respect our farmers, respect democracy, and respect the law of the land?

**Right Hon. Stephen Harper (Prime Minister, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, this party has for a long time received a strong mandate from western Canadian farmers in a democratic election for the platform on which we are proceeding. That party over there does not speak for those people, does not care about those people, does not represent those people. We do and we are going to act in their interests.

**Mr. Pat Martin (Winnipeg Centre, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, the ink was not even dry on the free trade agreement before the Americans started gunning for the Wheat Board. That is because they know that the Wheat Board is a huge advantage to Canadian farmers. Thirteen times they filed complaints at trade tribunals and 13 times they were defeated because the American trade tribunal knows there is nothing unfair about Canadian farmers acting collectively in their own best interests.

Why is the Conservative government now doing the Americans' dirty work for them?

**Hon. Gerry Ritz (Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food and Minister for the Canadian Wheat Board, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, as the member opposite should well know, there are some world-class Canadian traders, such as Viterro. The pulse industry and canola industry will now be able to handle those crops working with customers that they have worldwide. The Canadian Wheat Board will survive on a voluntary basis. They will be able to move on grains they are not pooling now. They will be able to broker grains. Everyone will be better off all the way around. Anywhere in the world this has been implemented, farmers have benefited.

**Mr. Pat Martin (Winnipeg Centre, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, folklore has it that the Canadian beaver will bite off its own testicles when it is threatened and offer them up to its tormentors. I think that is a fitting metaphor for the way our Canadian government reacts to bullying on trade issues, by carving off pieces of our nation and offering them to the Americans.

Whether it is on softwood lumber or now the Canadian Wheat Board, why is our government so willing and eager to unilaterally surrender what little trade advantages we have? Whose side is it on? Why is it selling out Canadian interests?

**Hon. Gerry Ritz (Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food and Minister for the Canadian Wheat Board, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I think that is a very fitting metaphor because the member for Winnipeg Centre is impotent to stand in the way of farmers getting freedom.

**Hon. Bob Rae (Toronto Centre, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, on the same subject, with a slightly different tone. In his first answer to the Leader of the Opposition, I heard the Prime Minister clearly state

### Oral Questions

that he was confident that he had the full support of the majority of western farmers.

I will ask him a simple question. If the Prime Minister is so confident that he does have that support, why will he not put this question in a plebiscite? We have had a referendum. Why not have a plebiscite and let the prairie farmers themselves decide what is going to them. Let them—

**Some hon. members:** Oh, oh!

**The Speaker:** Order, please. The right hon. Prime Minister.

**Right Hon. Stephen Harper (Prime Minister, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I cannot let go of the earlier exchange. I just hope the member for Winnipeg Centre's bark is not as bad as his bite.

In terms of the question put by the hon. member, we know we have a democratic mandate from western Canadian farmers. Their views are well-known. They have long favoured, by a large majority, dual marketing. There is really no debate about this. The only reason the Liberal Party does not understand that is that it does not have people on the ground in western Canada who know this.

\* \* \*

● (1430)

[Translation]

### CANADA-U.S. RELATIONS

**Hon. Bob Rae (Toronto Centre, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask the Prime Minister another question. I am absolutely certain that, after the American ambassador's speech yesterday about the buy American policy, the Prime Minister called President Obama to discuss this issue and all the other cases in which Canada is facing severe discrimination as a result of American protectionism.

Can the Prime Minister tell us what President Obama said when they spoke yesterday?

**Right Hon. Stephen Harper (Prime Minister, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, we are in regular contact with our American counterparts. They are well aware of our position on the buy American policy. It seems to me that protectionism is a hindrance to growth rather than a help, and we are encouraging our American friends not to take such action.

\* \* \*

[English]

### CRIMINAL CODE

**Hon. Bob Rae (Toronto Centre, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister and the government have come up with this completely unrealistic number of \$74.6 million as the cost for the changes in the Criminal Code that have been proposed by his government. There is not a person out there in the field who believes any of these numbers. They have absolutely no credibility with anybody.

Just at the moment, when the American conservative movement, to which the Prime Minister has paid such tribute his entire political career, is suddenly giving its head a shake and realizing just how wrong this path is, how expensive it is, how ineffective it is and how it is not, in fact, achieving any of the results it wants, why is the Prime Minister taking this country down exactly that same path?

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**Right Hon. Stephen Harper (Prime Minister, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I completely disagree with the premise of that question. In fact, as members know, incarceration rates in much of the United States are many times higher than those in Canada. It is a different approach.

In any case, in terms of the financial costs of the bill, these numbers have been provided to Parliament on multiple occasions. It does not matter whether the leader of the Liberal Party believes them. Those are the numbers.

\* \* \*

### TAXATION

**Ms. Peggy Nash (Parkdale—High Park, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, young families are feeling the squeeze from all sides. They are struggling to raise their kids, pay their bills, take care of their parents. The cost of living is skyrocketing while incomes have stalled. The average family makes just over \$68,000, the same as in 1976, and yet Canada's top CEOs now average whopping \$6.6 million a year.

Why are Conservatives adding to this inequality? Why will they not help out struggling Canadian families?

**Hon. Jim Flaherty (Minister of Finance, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, we have made substantial tax reductions for Canadian families, a total, for a typical Canadian family, of about \$3,000 a year. We have cut taxes in every way that the government collects them. We have increased the amount Canadians can earn tax free. We have fewer Canadians now paying any federal tax at all. As well, there have been the creation of 650,000 net new jobs since the end of the recession.

**Ms. Peggy Nash (Parkdale—High Park, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, clearly, things are getting so much worse for young families. Families are tired of the same old failed Conservative policies, no plan to create jobs and no plan to make life more affordable. Families today have a lower standard of living than their parents. CEO salaries are now one hundred times that of an average Canadian. Banks get richer. Young families are squeezed by bills and debt.

Why is the government and the minister ignoring the needs of young Canadian families?

**Hon. Jim Flaherty (Minister of Finance, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, why is the official opposition continually voting against every tax measure we bring into the House to help families in Canada and to help those who are on social assistance and who want to work? It was the party opposite that voted against the working income tax benefit, which is probably the most important social reform since the RRSP, but the NDP members voted against it.

[Translation]

**Mr. Hoang Mai (Brossard—La Prairie, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, a new study from the University of British Columbia confirms that it is becoming increasingly difficult for Canadians to raise their families. Families are facing an increase in housing costs, a stagnation of income and a decrease in services. They are having more and more trouble making ends meet.

Why does this government not make life more affordable for these families rather than lowering the taxes of large corporations?

• (1435)

[English]

**Hon. Jim Flaherty (Minister of Finance, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I know that the NDP's solution to all of this is a new \$10 billion tax, which it put forward to the Canadian people during the last election and which was resoundingly rejected.

What the Canadian people and Canadian families need is tax relief. They can pay less tax and they need jobs, so we are creating jobs as well. I hope the member opposite will vote for the hiring credit for new hires that is in the bill before the House, the second budget bill.

[Translation]

**Mr. Hoang Mai (Brossard—La Prairie, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, today, Canadian families have a lower standard of living than baby boomers did at their age. The average annual income of Canadian families has remained stable since the mid-1970s, but the cost of housing has increased by 76%. Canadian families have record levels of household debt.

When will the Conservatives take care of this generation, which is losing services and being pushed into excessive debt?

[English]

**Hon. Jim Flaherty (Minister of Finance, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, as the member opposite knows or should know, Canada is relatively well off. We have the best debt to GDP number in the G7. We have the best employment job creation record in the G7.

*Forbes* magazine, *The Economist* and the IMF say that Canada is the best place to invest in the world in the next five years. These are all matters with which Canadians can be proud. We have to be cautious. It is a fragile economic recovery globally and we are working hard to resolve the crisis in Europe. However, having said that, Canada is relatively well off.

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### INTERNATIONAL TRADE

**Mr. Robert Chisholm (Dartmouth—Cole Harbour, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, a new report from the Canadian Council of Chief Executives and the Canada China Business Council says that the Conservatives have fumbled economic dealings with the region so badly that Canada now has a bad reputation with Asia. Once again, the Conservatives are blundering relations with yet another important trade partner.

How can Canadians trust the Conservatives to move Canada forward on trade when every time they sign a deal they set the country back?



**Hon. Ed Fast (Minister of International Trade and Minister for the Asia-Pacific Gateway, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, our government understands that closer and deeper economic ties between Canada and Asia will benefit both our countries by creating more jobs, opportunities and prosperity.

The facts are this. I was in China last week demonstrating what Canada has to offer and to help expand our trade and investment relationship. Negotiations are moving forward on a FIPA with China. The week before I was in Indonesia and I signed Canada's first trade and investment framework agreement with Asia. We are getting it done for hard-working Canadians.

**Mr. Robert Chisholm (Dartmouth—Cole Harbour, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, the problem is that even the government's friends say that it has fumbled another deal. Again today, we heard that the Conservatives have continued to mess up the relations with the U.S. Another round of U.S. stimulus has meant that Canada is being excluded.

The Conservatives continue to ask Canadians to trust them while they negotiate a massive, closed door deal with Europe.

Every time the Conservatives make a deal, Canada loses. When will the Conservatives stop folding on trade negotiations and start standing up for Canadians?

**Hon. Ed Fast (Minister of International Trade and Minister for the Asia-Pacific Gateway, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, while that member was here grandstanding, I was in Washington dealing with my counterpart and meeting with key decision-makers and business people in the United States.

In these challenging times, deeper trade ties are the best way to create jobs on both sides of the border. We will continue to demand the removal of buy American measures. They are hurtful to both economies on both sides of our border. Protectionist measures, as proposed in the American jobs bill, are a danger to our fragile global economic recovery.

[Translation]

**Mr. Mathieu Ravignat (Pontiac, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, his weak response is a reflection of their weakness at the bargaining table. Canada is in the process of negotiating a trade agreement with the European Union that could disrupt our local dairy and cheese markets because of the massive influx of products from a market of 650 million people. Our supply management system, which has been working effectively for 40 years, is in jeopardy.

Does this government commit to taking the supply management system off the bargaining table and protecting the families who depend on this industry?

• (1440)

[English]

**Hon. Ed Fast (Minister of International Trade and Minister for the Asia-Pacific Gateway, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, we have made it clear, time and time again, that we are defending supply management. We are standing up for the farmers and their families of this country.

### Oral Questions

The truth is that the NDP is opposed to trade. That is the reality of it and the proof is in the pudding. The NDP members talk big about trade and about fair trade but what they really mean is no trade at all.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

### TRANSPORT

**Mr. Jamie Nicholls (Vaudreuil—Soulanges, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, yesterday, an information leak revealed that the government has been in possession of a report since January. This report shows that a high-speed train originating in Quebec City would benefit the entire Canadian economy. Canada is the only G8 country that does not have infrastructure for high-speed trains. That is a deficit that puts us at a competitive disadvantage.

Where is the Conservatives' plan for a high-speed train to bring Canada up to speed with the rest of the world?

**Hon. Denis Lebel (Minister of Transport, Infrastructure and Communities and Minister of the Economic Development Agency of Canada for the Regions of Quebec, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, we received the report and are reviewing it. This report was funded by three partners: the Government of Quebec, the Government of Ontario and the Government of Canada. And, as is appropriate, we will wait for the Province of Ontario to appoint its next transportation minister. We will speak with these people and a decision will be made public.

[English]

**Mr. Brian Masse (Windsor West, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, that is a very slow read. This leaked report is suggesting that we abandon passenger rail in southern Ontario and ignore its connections with the U.S. High-speed rail from Quebec City to Windsor and on to Chicago should be a priority. The United States is moving forward, investing hundreds of millions of dollars, while Canada just studies the issue. Even Uzbekistan is rolling right past us, building high-speed rail.

Will the minister create a stakeholder working group today to ensure that high-speed rail from Windsor to Quebec City happens and we connect into Chicago? Will the minister act and bring the stakeholders in and see some action for a change?

**Hon. Denis Lebel (Minister of Transport, Infrastructure and Communities and Minister of the Economic Development Agency of Canada for the Regions of Quebec, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, that MP already knows I will work hard for a new bridge between Windsor and Detroit. He knows it is long. We have a lot of démarche to do and we have a lot of work with the U.S.A. and now we want to be getting something for Chicago. How many years does the member think it will take?

### Oral Questions

For now, the study has been received by the government. We will study it and then the province of Ontario will name its new minister of transport and we will discuss it with him or her.

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### CANADA-U.S. RELATIONS

**Hon. Wayne Easter (Malpeque, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, yesterday, the U.S. ambassador basically told the Minister of International Trade that it was lovely having a chat but that the United States will maintain its protectionist stance denying Canadian participation in stimulus.

Now, on this very day, the government is selling out farmers' marketing rights to United States interests. After winning 14 challenges with the U.S., now the Prime Minister serves up the Canadian Wheat Board on a silver platter.

Why is the Minister of International Trade consistently allowing a sell-out to U.S. interests?

**Hon. Ed Fast (Minister of International Trade and Minister for the Asia-Pacific Gateway, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, we have made it very clear, time and time again, that we are focused on building Canada's economy and on creating jobs.

I was in the United States yesterday and the day before meeting with my counterpart and meeting with key decision-makers in the United States making it very clear that barriers to trade hurt both of our countries. We will continue to stand up for hard-working Canadians. Why will the Liberals not?

**Ms. Joyce Murray (Vancouver Quadra, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, for weeks U.S. legislators have mused about putting a new tax on U.S.-bound cargo transported through Canadian ports. Instead of confronting this job killing threat head on, the Conservative minister has essentially said, "Don't worry, be happy".

Well he should worry and he should act. The U.S. government is formally considering this unfair new tariff.

Why is the Conservative government abandoning Canadian businesses and ports? Why is it refusing to fight this next protectionist attack on Canadian jobs?

**Hon. Ed Fast (Minister of International Trade and Minister for the Asia-Pacific Gateway, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I do not accept the premise of that question. As I have repeatedly said, any new tax, any new barrier at the border raises consumer costs—

**Some hon. members:** Oh, oh!

**The Speaker:** Order, please. The Minister of International Trade has the floor.

• (1445)

**Hon. Ed Fast:** Mr. Speaker, we welcome the U.S. ambassador's, David Jacobson, assurances that no new taxes on cargo entering the United States from Canada will be forthcoming. We also share his view that the Canada-U.S. trading relationship is the very best on earth.

We will defend Canada's competitive advantages, especially with respect to its ports. I have made this clear to the FMC Commissioner Lidinsky and my U.S. counterpart, Ambassador Kirk.

Canada's ports and railways are competing fairly and the Asia-Pacific gateway initiative is working—

**The Speaker:** The hon. member for Kings—Hants.

**Hon. Scott Brison (Kings—Hants, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, when Conservatives negotiated their perimeter deal with the U.S., what exactly did Canada get in return?

There was no amnesty for Canada-U.S. dual citizens who are facing U.S. fines on their Canadian savings. There are no privacy measures to stop the U.S. from forcing Canadian banks to disclose personal information on Canadians. There is nothing for Canadian workers who stand to lose their jobs facing U.S. protectionism and buy American provisions.

Why will the Conservatives not stand up for Canada when they are negotiating with America?

**Hon. Jim Flaherty (Minister of Finance, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, FACTA has far reaching implications as it would require Canadian banks to collect a great deal of information and at a very substantial expense. I have reviewed this with all of our Canadian banks. I have also raised it with the secretary of the treasury and my officials continue to discuss it with them. We are hopeful that we will be able to arrive at an arrangement with the Americans that would not require this needless expense.

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### HUMAN RIGHTS

**Mr. Randall Garrison (Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, the Commonwealth Eminent Persons Group has called on member states to address human rights directly and make it a priority at their upcoming meetings in Perth.

In 41 of 54 Commonwealth states being gay is still illegal, meaning people who are otherwise law-abiding could be arrested and prosecuted just for being gay.

Would the Minister of Foreign Affairs commit to using Canada's prominent role in the Commonwealth to ensure that lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender rights are a high priority at the Commonwealth heads of government meeting next week in Perth?

**Hon. John Baird (Minister of Foreign Affairs, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, Canada will be taking a very active role in Perth to ensure the issue of human rights is front and centre. There are substantial proposals that will be before Commonwealth leaders, including issues with respect to human rights, a Commonwealth charter, more democracy and more freedom. That certainly includes the rights of gays and lesbians.



The member opposite and the House can be assured that Canada will continue to push human rights at the Commonwealth summit.

[Translation]

**Mr. Dany Morin (Chicoutimi—Le Fjord, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, The Commonwealth Eminent Persons Group is calling on member states to support the decriminalization of homosexuality. This is a fundamental human rights issue and an important step in the fight against the spread of HIV-AIDS.

Will the Minister of Foreign Affairs commit to using Canada's diplomatic influence to put an end to the criminalization of homosexuality around the world? This is 2011—it is about time.

[English]

**Hon. John Baird (Minister of Foreign Affairs, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, absolutely. At the last Commonwealth summit, the Prime Minister was able to bring the objections of all members of this House to the government of Uganda for an outrageous bill that was before its parliament.

At the Commonwealth summit in Perth, we will continue to fight for human rights to ensure that Canadian values are promoted and advanced at these international summits, and that certainly includes the rights of gays and lesbians.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

#### CITIZENSHIP AND IMMIGRATION

**Ms. Marjolaine Boutin-Sweet (Hochelaga, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, if the Minister of Citizenship, Immigration and Multiculturalism does not intervene by tomorrow, two young homosexual men, David Perez and Pablo Gonzalez, will be deported to Mexico. The two fear for their safety if they return to Mexico, but the Canada Border Services Agency has refused to delay their removal pending an appeal on humanitarian grounds.

Will the minister intervene and stop this forced removal until the appeal is heard?

**Hon. Jason Kenney (Minister of Citizenship, Immigration and Multiculturalism, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, we have a very fair asylum system, but it is a legal system, not a political system. It is up to the courts, to the quasi-judicial bodies such as the Immigration and Refugee Board, and to the Federal Court, to decide whether or not people are refugees who need Canada's protection. It is totally inappropriate for members of Parliament or even ministers to reverse the legal decisions of our just, legal system.

**Ms. Marjolaine Boutin-Sweet (Hochelaga, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, we know that when they return to Mexico, these two men and their family members will again be subjected to threats, violence and persecution.

Before coming to Canada, they were attacked many times by the authorities that should have been protecting them. Mr. Perez and Mr. Gonzalez have legitimate reasons to fear for their lives if they leave Canada.

What steps is this government taking to ensure that violence against these men and other members of Mexico's homosexual community is taken seriously?

• (1450)

**Hon. Jason Kenney (Minister of Citizenship, Immigration and Multiculturalism, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, this Parliament created the Immigration and Refugee Board to examine asylum claims on the basis of evidence and the criteria permitted by our laws. It is up to the board to decide if a person is being persecuted or if the personal safety of that person is threatened. It is up to the Federal Court to review those decisions. There is even a pre-removal risk assessment. If the appeal is denied, another appeal to the Federal Court is possible. That means that we have a fair and just system for all asylum seekers.

\* \* \*

#### SMALL BUSINESS

**Mr. Costas Menegakis (Richmond Hill, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, this week is dedicated to small and medium-sized businesses that create wealth and jobs throughout Canada. They play a vital role in our economy.

Can the minister responsible for small business and tourism tell the House what measures have been taken to support these businesses?

**Hon. Maxime Bernier (Minister of State (Small Business and Tourism), CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I would be pleased to tell the House what this government is doing for small and medium-sized businesses. We have cut their tax rate to 11%. We have created the Red Tape Reduction Commission. We know that time is money for small businesses and they need to spend less time filling out government paperwork and more time doing what they do best—creating jobs in Canada. We support entrepreneurs and we are proud of them.

\* \* \*

[English]

#### G8 SUMMIT

**Mr. Charlie Angus (Timmins—James Bay, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, yesterday, after 131 days of dodging accountability, the Muskoka minister finally peered up over his desk. He made a quick little joke and he went back into hibernation. However, he did not say “sorry”. He did not explain why he ran a slush fund from his office. He did not explain why the paper trail was hidden from the Auditor General. The Auditor General said that the rules were broken and Parliament must investigate.

Will the minister do the right thing? Will he come out of hibernation, stand in this House, and commit to a full parliamentary investigation of his role in the G8 slush fund?

**Hon. John Baird (Minister of Foreign Affairs, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, it will not come as any surprise to my friend from northern Ontario that I do not agree with the premise of his question.

### Oral Questions

The Auditor General has thoroughly looked into this issue. She has come out with a strong report. This government has fully accepted the report and fully accepted all the recommendations that she has represented.

I know the President of the Treasury Board is just as excited as I am to be able to appear before the public accounts committee. We look forward to that opportunity in very short order.

**Mr. Charlie Angus (Timmins—James Bay, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, clearly, after 132 days the Minister of Foreign Affairs does not get it either, that pork barrel boondoggles do not come in under budget.

The Auditor General does not approve them. They set up a slush fund with the three amigos: the mayor, the hotel manager and the minister. They blew through \$50 million, often in untendered contracts, with no oversight.

I am asking again, the Auditor General said the rules were broken, will he stand up and commit to a full investigation of this rogue minister? Unless we fix the rules, this will happen again and again under his watch.

**Hon. John Baird (Minister of Foreign Affairs, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I am very happy to correct the record for my friend opposite. None of the three individuals he mentioned approved any of the 32 projects. I did.

[Translation]

**Mr. Alexandre Boulerice (Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, it took the President of the Treasury Board 131 days to stand up and respond to our questions. However, since he merely spouted a few silly comments, we were left less than satisfied, especially knowing that the Auditor General said that the member for Parry Sound—Muskoka was the one responsible, that he disobeyed the rules and that he concealed information during the investigation.

Is that why the President of the Treasury Board is seeking revenge and cutting the Auditor General's funding?

[English]

**Hon. John Baird (Minister of Foreign Affairs, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, this government fully co-operated with the Auditor General. Sheila Fraser did an outstanding job for Canadians. She reviewed the 32 projects where every single dollar has been accounted for. Every single dollar went for public infrastructure. Every single project came in on or under budget. The fund itself was under spent.

With respect to the Auditor General, the Auditor General saw the leadership that the President of the Treasury Board was taking to try to rein in government spending and offered to voluntarily participate. That is leadership.

Mr. Speaker, while I am on my feet, we look forward to you participating too.

• (1455)

[Translation]

**Mr. Alexandre Boulerice (Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, yesterday the minister told us that all 308 ridings received infrastructure funding. But, clearly, being friends with the minister makes it much easier to get in on that slush fund. The mayor of Huntsville should know: 18,000 residents, \$30 million.

Now that we know that the minister is able, or was able, to rise and speak, can he tell us if all ridings received a media centre that was never used by the media and a campus that is not being used by any students or are lucky enough to have a minister who never answers any questions?

[English]

**Hon. John Baird (Minister of Foreign Affairs, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I would command the member to review the committee hearings on infrastructure where he will see the NDP member for Winnipeg Centre being quoted as saying, "I believe the money was fairly well distributed. NDP ridings did fairly well", and I agree.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

### OFFICIAL LANGUAGES

**Hon. Bob Rae (Toronto Centre, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I am addressing my questions regarding official languages and the commissioner's report to the Prime Minister. In his report, the commissioner clearly states, "Five years after amendments were made to the Official Languages Act, the Government of Canada has still not affirmed, loudly and clearly, that full and proactive compliance with Part VII of the Act is a priority."

When will the government clearly affirm that part VII and improving the situation of minority communities are still a priority for the Canadian government?

**Hon. James Moore (Minister of Canadian Heritage and Official Languages, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, here is a quotation from the report: "[Our government] systematically consults official language communities through working groups and federal councils, and when developing cooperation agreements with provinces and territories."

This government is well aware of the needs of official language communities and it takes those needs into account during the development and implementation of these programs. These are achievements. These are results. This is a Conservative government.

\* \* \*

### CANADA POST

**Hon. Denis Coderre (Bourassa, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, we learned yesterday that Canada Post is going ahead with cuts to work hours in post offices in Quebec that are unfair and disproportionate compared to the rest of the country. We are talking about 53% in Quebec, while the average in other provinces is 4% to 8%. As though that were not enough, in the market assessment criteria, Canada Post was suddenly much more interested in the political affiliation of the riding in which the post office is located.

Is this 53% cut the Conservative Party's response to the fact that it was rejected by the vast majority of Quebecers?

[English]

**Hon. Steven Fletcher (Minister of State (Transport), CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I reject the premise of the member's question.



The fact is that everyone who has a permanent job with Canada Post will continue to do so. There is some fluctuation in operations. This year there has been a reduction in postal demand in Quebec, but that just goes with the territory of a shifting market. Canada Post makes decisions based on its own operations. The government does not get involved.

The member should support the good work that Canada Post is doing.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

### SMALL BUSINESS

**Mr. Raymond Côté (Beauport—Limoilou, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, as we celebrate Small Business Week, the situation of small businesses in the country is alarming. According to Industry Canada's most recent newsletter, funding for small business has levelled off since the Conservatives came to power. Business owners have to work extremely hard, but this government prefers to give enormous tax cuts to corporations, even though we know such cuts are ineffective.

Will this government listen to the NDP and lower the tax rate for small businesses?

**Hon. Maxime Bernier (Minister of State (Small Business and Tourism), CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I like hearing the NDP advocating tax cuts. The hon. member's argument is a bit awkward because, at the same time, some of his colleagues are advocating more government spending, bigger government and a larger debt. Instead of stimulating the economy, they want to give it a sedative by spending money that we do not have. The important thing for small businesses is that we have cut their tax rate to 11% so they can keep more money in their pockets and do what they have to do best: create jobs.

• (1500)

**Mr. Raymond Côté (Beauport—Limoilou, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I do not want to see the government simply tossing quarters here and there for small businesses.

Let us look at something else. Under this government, it is becoming increasingly difficult for young entrepreneurs to get funding, yet small businesses are responsible for creating 60% to 70% of jobs. This situation is unsustainable, especially knowing that the youth unemployment rate is at a worrisome level.

Will this government finally introduce a job creation tax credit, as the NDP has been asking for?

**Hon. Maxime Bernier (Minister of State (Small Business and Tourism), CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I want to inform the hon. member that I was in Montreal yesterday with the Canadian Youth Business Foundation, which provides \$15,000 loans to young entrepreneurs who want to start a business and create wealth.

By giving that foundation a contribution of \$20 million in the last budget, we have enabled 1,000 young entrepreneurs across the country to create their own jobs, as well as jobs for other Canadians. That is what it means to support young entrepreneurs.

[English]

### Oral Questions

### AGRICULTURE

**Mr. Leon Benoit (Vegreville—Wainwright, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, yesterday, the government introduced the historic marketing freedom for grain farmers act. This legislation will allow farmers in my riding to market their wheat and barley to any buyer of their choice, just like farmers in eastern Canada. This is legislation that farmers want and expect to see passed by Parliament and it will modernize research in the grain sector in western Canada.

Would the Minister of Agriculture please tell the House what positive change the bill would bring to research and development in western Canada?

**Hon. Gerry Ritz (Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food and Minister for the Canadian Wheat Board, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, as a farmer, my friend and colleague from Vegreville—Wainwright knows the value of innovation and research to the farm sector. That is why the government has been proud to partner with industry, academia, the provinces and so on to put forward a good, solid research-based scientific funding initiative.

We will continue to do that under that marketing freedom for grain farmers act, with a voluntary point of sale check off, which will keep the funding flowing for those great entities like the Canadian International Grains Institute, the Western Grains Research Foundation and the Malt Barley Technical Centre.

\* \* \*

### THE ENVIRONMENT

**Mr. Rodger Cuzner (Cape Breton—Canso, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, it has become obvious to all Nova Scotians that in the case of the MV *Miner* it is not just the rotting carcass of the abandoned freighter that has been cut loose by the government, but the Province of Nova Scotia finds itself cut adrift as well.

Premier Dexter says that he cannot get an answer from Ottawa, so I will give the minister an opportunity to respond today.

Will the minister state clearly here today whether he believes the responsibility to remove that ship lies solely with the Province of Nova Scotia? It is a very simple question. Is the Province of Nova Scotia solely responsible for the removal of that wreck?

**Hon. Denis Lebel (Minister of Transport, Infrastructure and Communities and Minister of the Economic Development Agency of Canada for the Regions of Quebec, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the premier has already had some discussions with the minister of this government. We gave him the answer we gave here in the House. Transport Canada's role is to ensure that Canada's waterways provide safe navigation, free of ship source pollution. We have determined that the MV *Miner* is not polluting the marine environment and is not a threat to navigation. That is provincial jurisdiction, and we will continue to work with the province.

*Oral Questions***PENSIONS**

**Mr. Wayne Marston (Hamilton East—Stoney Creek, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, over the last five years, many workers across Canada have seen their pensions drastically reduced because their employers went out of business. Yesterday, I tabled Bill C-331, my pension protection act, which is designed to give pensions priority at the time of bankruptcies. At the present time pensioners must wait behind junk bondholders and bank investments. This is done before they can get their pensions, their deferred wages. This is clearly wrong.

Will the government work with New Democrats to give pensioners the protection they need?

**Hon. Ted Menzies (Minister of State (Finance), CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I wish the New Democrats would have worked with us when we moved legislation to protect those pensions to which he referred. In fact, in 2009 they voted against protecting pensions by requiring companies to fully fund pension benefits on planned termination. We also ensured that pensions would be stable for those seniors and we gave pensioners more negotiating powers in their own pensions. The NDP voted against all of those pieces in that legislation.

\* \* \*

● (1505)

**SHIPBUILDING INDUSTRY**

**Mrs. Kelly Block (Saskatoon—Rosetown—Biggar, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the national shipbuilding strategy will result in the creation of thousands of new jobs and billions in economic growth in the cities and communities all across Canada. This is an arm's-length process, independent from the government.

The leader of the official opposition is calling, at this late stage, for the government to politically intervene and provide the contract to all three shipyards that submitted bids.

Could the minister please respond to this call?

**Hon. Rona Ambrose (Minister of Public Works and Government Services and Minister for Status of Women, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, our government made the historic decision to build our ships for the navy and coast guard right in Canada and that will result in the creation of 15,000 jobs annually for the next 30 years.

The decision to have two Canadian shipyards build our large ships was made in consultation with the shipyards themselves. The national shipbuilding strategy was designed to generate a competitive environment that would result in the best value for taxpayers.

I am also happy to inform the House that I met with the fairness monitor yesterday. He has submitted his final reports and has said that the decisions were made objectively, free from personal favouritism and political influence and encompass the elements of openness, competitiveness, transparency and compliance.

\* \* \*

**SEARCH AND RESCUE**

**Mr. Ryan Cleary (St. John's South—Mount Pearl, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, Canada has one of the worst search and rescue response times in the world. A recent incident off Bell Island, Newfoundland showed just how bad it was.

After emergency flares were fired in the area, the Coast Guard called in a provincial ferry, full of passengers, to help the search and rescue effort. It then took the Canadian Coast Guard vessel over three hours to arrive on the scene.

This is not about a limo service from a fishing lodge; this is about human lives. How long would the minister be prepared to wait in icy water before being rescued?

**Hon. Keith Ashfield (Minister of Fisheries and Oceans and Minister for the Atlantic Gateway, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the member opposite knows full well that the search and rescue system is made up of a network of potential responders that includes the Coast Guard, the Coast Guard auxiliary, the Canadian Forces and any vessel of opportunity. Any vessel within the vicinity of a search and rescue call can be asked to assist.

When the flares are discharged, the CCG will treat it as a matter of distress. If the member would like to be constructive, he would help us to take this message back to the public so that lives are not put at unnecessary risk.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

**GOVERNMENT APPOINTMENTS**

**Mr. Louis Plamondon (Bas-Richelieu—Nicolet—Bécancour, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, despite the recognition of Quebec as a nation, the three parties recognized in this House unanimously approved the appointment of a unilingual anglophone judge to the Supreme Court, demonstrating their lack of concern for the French language. In addition to being criticized by the public, this choice was also rejected by the Barreau du Québec, which asks the parliamentary committee tasked with examining these recommendations not to appoint the unilingual judge.

Will the Minister of Justice tell Quebecers that he respects their language and that, as a result, his government will reconsider its decision to appoint a unilingual anglophone judge?

[English]

**Hon. Rob Nicholson (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, first, I should point out for the hon. member that the Supreme Court has an excellent reputation and record in facilitating both official languages of our country. I have every confidence that will continue.

The individuals whose names have been unanimously approved and recommended by the committees of the House of Commons are based on merit and legal excellence. That should be important for the hon. member as well.



## ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

[English]

### COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE

#### FISHERIES AND OCEANS

**Mr. Rodney Weston (Saint John, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the first report of the Standing Committee on Fisheries and Oceans on the snow crab industry in the Atlantic provinces and Quebec.

I wish to acknowledge the contribution of former members of the committee, especially those who are no longer among us in the House. I would also like to thank committee members from both sides of the House for their collaboration in making this report a unanimous one. Special thanks, as well, go to the committee staff for the hard work.

#### PROCEDURE AND HOUSE AFFAIRS

**Mr. Joe Preston (Elgin—Middlesex—London, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the sixth report of the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs.

The committee advises that pursuant to Standing Order 91.1(2) the Subcommittee on Private Members' Business met to consider the items on the order of precedence. As a result of its establishment on Monday, October 3, it recommended that the items listed herein, which have been determined should not be designated non-votable, be considered by the House.

• (1510)

**The Speaker:** Pursuant to Standing Order 91.1(2) the report is deemed adopted.

(Motion agreed to)

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### PETITIONS

#### NUCLEAR WEAPONS

**Mr. Terence Young (Oakville, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, Canadians are well aware of the destructive power of nuclear weapons, a power that the world's worst dictators and terrorists are trying to acquire.

I would like to present to the House a petition from the Oakville chapter of the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons. The petition is signed by 330 residents of Oakville.

The petitioners ask the government to commit to the motion passed by the House on December 7, 2010, regarding the global disarmament of nuclear weapons.

I am happy to present this petition for a response from our government.

#### ASBESTOS

**Mr. John Rafferty (Thunder Bay—Rainy River, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, my petitioners call upon Parliament to ban asbestos in all its forms and to institute a just transition program for asbestos workers in the communities in which they live.

### Routine Proceedings

They call on the government to end all government subsidies of asbestos both in Canada and abroad and to stop blocking international health and safety conventions designed to protect workers from asbestos, such as the Rotterdam Convention.

#### FISHERIES AND OCEANS

**Mr. Scott Simms (Bonaville—Gander—Grand Falls—Windsor, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I rise today to present this petition. Several people in my riding, St. John's, Twillingate, Lewisporte and even places in New Brunswick have signed this petition.

The petitioners ask the government to dismantle the Department of Fisheries and Oceans. The Government of Canada should replace the current DFO with a scientifically-oriented body, although, in light of the recent announcement, that will be a little difficult to do.

The petitioners request that the Government of Canada initiate a public inquiry into all aspects of the Department of Fisheries and Oceans, with emphasis on fisheries management, dismantle the current structure of the Department of the Fisheries and Oceans and put in place a model that takes into account fishery science, with an emphasis on serving the fishermen who make a living from the industry coast to coast to coast.

#### CANADIAN WHEAT BOARD

**Mr. Pat Martin (Winnipeg Centre, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present a petition signed by literally thousands of Canadians from all over the country.

The petitioners draw the attention of Parliament that farmer and prairie grain producers have the right to decide the future of how they market their grain and their organization, the Canadian Wheat Board. As such, they point out that they have conducted a prairie-wide vote on the single desk for wheat and barley. They point out that some 22,000 prairie farmers voted for the single desk monopoly of the Canadian Wheat Board.

Therefore, the petitioners request that the government and the Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food honour the democratically-expressed wishes of western Canadian farmers and uphold the single desk monopoly of the Canadian Wheat Board.

#### SEARCH AND RESCUE

**Hon. Gerry Byrne (Humber—St. Barbe—Baie Verte, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I wish to table a petition before the House, duly certified by the clerk of petitions, regarding the Government of Canada's hasty and uninformed announcement to close the Maritime Rescue Sub-Centre in St. John's, Newfoundland and Labrador.

In light of the historic and recent marine tragedies, including the *Ocean Ranger* tragedy, the Cougar 491 tragedy, the *Ryan's Commander* tragedy, the *Melina* and *Keith II* tragedy, to name just a few incidents, as the petitioners say in their prayer, and due to fatalities unique to Newfoundland and Labrador in the maritime setting, the request that Parliament reverse its ultimate decision and immediately reinstate the Marine Rescue Sub-Centre in St. John's, Newfoundland and Labrador.

These petitioners hail from Englee, Newfoundland and Labrador, along with several other communities in my riding of Humber—St. Barbe—Baie Verte.

*Routine Proceedings*

[Translation]

## CANADIAN WHEAT BOARD

**Mr. Robert Aubin (Trois-Rivières, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to present a petition signed by Canadians from across the country who recognize that farmers are able to work together to provide themselves with the best services and who are calling on the government to review its position regarding potentially abolishing the Canadian Wheat Board.

● (1515)

[English]

**Mr. Charlie Angus (Timmins—James Bay, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I am very honoured today to bring forward a petition signed by hundreds of people from the wonderful province of Alberta.

The petitioner are asking parliamentarians to defend the right of western farmers, because the fundamental principle of any farm-based marketing system is that the farmers decide their future, and this is not happening in the case of the Wheat Board, wherein the government is intervening and ignoring the democratic choice of western prairie farmers.

The petitioners are asking us as the New Democratic Party to ensure their voices are heard in this House, because they are clearly not being represented by the government.

The petitioners are calling upon the government to bring to the attention of the Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food that the farmers have the right to decide the future of their marketing organization, the Canadian Wheat Board, and as such conducted a prairie-wide vote on the single desk for wheat and barley.

Therefore, the petitioners request the Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food to honour the democratically expressed wishes of western Canadian farmers.

\* \* \*

## QUESTIONS ON THE ORDER PAPER

**Mr. Tom Lukiwski (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I ask that all questions be allowed to stand.

**The Speaker:** Is that agreed?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

## COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE

## ENVIRONMENT AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

**Hon. Peter Van Loan (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, there have been discussions among the parties and I would ask for unanimous consent for the following motion:

That the Standing Committee on Environment and Sustainable Development be the committee for the purposes of the Statutes of Canada, 2003, Chapter 9, section 32.

[English]

**The Speaker:** Does the hon. government House leader have the unanimous consent of the House to propose this motion?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**The Speaker:** The House has heard the terms of the motion. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

(Motion agreed to)

\* \* \*

## PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

**The Speaker:** Order, please.

The House will soon begin private members' business for the first time in this Parliament. I would, therefore, like to make a brief statement regarding the management of private members' business.

I want to remind all hon. members about the procedures governing private members' business and the responsibilities of the Chair in the management of this process.

[Translation]

As members know, certain constitutional procedural realities constrain the Speaker and members insofar as legislation is concerned. One such procedural principle concerns whether or not a private member's bill requires a royal recommendation. The Speaker has underscored this principle in a number of statements over the course of preceding parliaments.

[English]

As noted on page 831 of *House of Commons Procedure and Practice*, second edition:

Under the Canadian system of government, the Crown alone initiates all public expenditure and Parliament may only authorize spending which has been recommended by the Governor General. This prerogative, referred to as the "financial initiative of the Crown", is the basis essential to the system of responsible government and is signified by way of the "royal recommendation".

[Translation]

The requirement for a royal recommendation is grounded in constitutional principles found in the Constitution Act, 1867. The language of section 54 of that act is echoed in Standing Order 79(1), which reads:

This House shall not adopt or pass any vote, resolution, address or bill for the appropriation of any part of the public revenue, or of any tax or impost, to any purpose that has not been first recommended to the House by a message from the Governor General in the session in which such vote, resolution, address or bill is proposed

[English]

Any bill that authorizes the spending of public funds for a new and distinct purpose or effects an appropriation of public funds must be accompanied by a message from the Governor General recommending the expenditure to the House. This message, known formally as the "royal recommendation", can only be transmitted to the House by a minister of the crown.



A private member's bill that requires a royal recommendation may, however, be introduced and considered right up until third reading, on the assumption that a royal recommendation will be provided by a minister. If none is produced by the conclusion of the third reading stage, the Speaker is required to decline to put the question on third reading.

[Translation]

Following the establishment or the replenishment of the order of precedence, the Chair has developed a practice of reviewing items so that the House can be alerted to bills which, at first glance, appear to impinge on the financial prerogative of the Crown. The aim of this practice is to allow members the opportunity to intervene in a timely fashion to present their views about the need for those bills to be accompanied by a royal recommendation.

• (1520)

[English]

Accordingly, following the establishment of the order of precedence on October 5, 2011, I wish to draw the attention of the House to three bills that give the Chair some concern as to the spending provisions they contemplate. These are Bill C-215, An Act to amend the Canadian Forces Superannuation Act and the Royal Canadian Mounted Police Superannuation Act (deletion of deduction from annuity), standing in the name of the member for Sackville—Eastern Shore.

[Translation]

There is also Bill C-291, An Act to amend the Employment Insurance Act (waiting period and maximum special benefits), standing in the name of the member for Bourassa.

[English]

The third bill is Bill C-308, An Act respecting a Commission of Inquiry into the development and implementation of a national fishery rebuilding strategy for fish stocks off the coast of Newfoundland and Labrador, standing in the name of the member for St. John's South—Mount Pearl.

[Translation]

I would encourage hon. members who would like to make arguments regarding the requirement of a royal recommendation for any of these bills, or with regard to any other bills now on the order of precedence, to do so at an early opportunity.

[English]

In addition, members are likely aware that a point of order was raised yesterday by the member for Windsor—Tecumseh regarding Bill C-317, An Act to amend the Income Tax Act (labour organizations), standing in the name of the member for South Surrey—White Rock—Cloverdale, arguing that this bill should have been preceded by a ways and means motion. As members know, limitations exist on the manner in which taxation measures may be amended in the absence of an accompanying ways and means motion. If a bill that requires a ways and means motion has not been preceded by one, our rules do not permit it to remain on the order paper.

### *Privilege*

As I stated in the House last night, should any other members wish to provide additional information regarding Bill C-317, they are encouraged to raise them without unnecessary delay, as the Chair has taken note of the matter and would like to ensure the question is resolved as quickly as possible.

Finally, I should inform members that earlier today I received written notice from the hon. member for South Surrey—White Rock—Cloverdale that he would be unable to move his motion should private members' business begin tomorrow.

As members well know, private members' business is set to start 24 hours following the presentation of the report of the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs indicating those items which remain votable, and no exchange can be requested prior to the tabling of the said report.

The report was indeed tabled earlier today, and the member now finds himself in the unforeseen situation of not being able to provide the 48 hours' notice required to proceed with an exchange.

In this particular case, and considering my role regarding the orderly and timely conduct of private members' business pursuant to Standing Order 94(1)(a), I will allow the exchange to proceed without the usual notice requirement.

The Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs may wish to examine this matter and consider whether our practices in relation to the application of Standing Orders 94(1)(a) and 94(2)(a) continue to serve the House in an effective manner. As your Speaker, I see no reason why the member occupying the first position on the order of precedence would not be afforded an opportunity to make an exchange, while all other members can do so.

[Translation]

I thank hon. members for their attention.

[English]

I understand the hon. member for Malpeque has some further comments about the question of privilege raised.

\* \* \*

### **PRIVILEGE**

#### LEGISLATION TO REORGANIZE THE CANADIAN WHEAT BOARD

**Hon. Wayne Easter (Malpeque, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I rise in response to the government House leader's intervention yesterday afternoon with respect to the question of privilege I raised earlier in the day in regard to the legitimacy of the government's tabling Bill C-18, which in effect requires members of this House to engage in a process that, according to a statute previously passed by the House, violates a specific provision of that statute.

The government House leader appeared somewhat concerned over the fact that in my submission I failed to cite precedents. I feel obligated to address his concerns. His point, apparently, was that "... questions of law are beyond the jurisdiction of the Chair".

### Privilege

What the government House leader overlooked the beginning of the quote he referenced. Perhaps it was not provided to him or perhaps it was purposely overlooked. It is on page 261 of *House of Commons Procedure and Practice*, second edition. I will read the whole quote. I will not leave part of it out.

Finally, while Speakers must take the Constitution and statutes into account when preparing a ruling, numerous...

Note the word “numerous”. It is not stating “all”.

....Speakers have explained that it is not up to the Speaker to rule on the “constitutionality” or “legality” of measures before the House.

The government House leader and government members generally would do well to spend a little more time reading *House of Commons Procedure and Practice* before venturing forth.

The following is found at page 261 of *House of Commons Procedure and Practice*, second edition, and refers to a statement of Speaker Fraser from *Debates*, April 14, 1987:

Speaker Fraser summed the fine balancing act that is often involved in adapting old rules to new situations: “When interpreting the rules of procedure, the Speaker must take account not only of their letter but of their spirit and be guided by the most basic rule of all, that of common sense”.

I would also point to the conclusion contained in the same page in *House of Commons Procedure and Practice*, which states:

Speakers have never shied away from creating new precedents when faced with an apparent contradiction between Standing Orders and contemporary values.

It is my submission that this is one of these instances.

I know, Mr. Speaker, you are our elected Speaker, new in the job, and this is really an opportunity for you, in looking at these precedents, to establish fair play that protects the interests of Canadians and prevents Parliament from violating its own acts that it passed at a previous time.

I would now draw the attention of the Speaker to the following, found at page 720 of *House of Commons Procedure and Practice*, second edition:

The enactment of a statute by Parliament is the final step in a long process that starts with the proposal, preparation and drafting of a bill. The drafting of a bill is a vital stage in this process—one which challenges the decision makers and drafters to take carefully into account certain constraints, since a failure to abide by these may have negative consequences in relation to the eventual interpretation and application of the law and to the proper functioning of the legislative process.

I would ask you, Mr. Speaker, to take special note of the reference to the fact that decision-makers, in this case the Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food:

....take carefully into account certain constraints, since a failure to abide by these may have negative consequences in relation to the eventual interpretation and application of the law and to the proper functioning of the legislative process.

I would also reference footnote 59 at page 721 of *House of Commons Procedure and Practice*, second edition. It refers to the guide to making federal acts and regulations, which is found on the Government of Canada, Privy Council office website.

In the introduction to that document, the following statement is found with respect to the law-making process:

If the process is carefully planned and competently carried out, the resulting legislation will achieve the Government's goals while adhering strictly to the principles and policies underlying our legal system.

• (1525)

Within that same document, under the section “Acts of General Application”, the following statement is found:

Those involved in the preparation of bills will take into account the requirement of explicitness so as to ensure that any political decision to exclude the operation of a presumptively applicable law is legally effective.

Finally, I would reference the following from the document under the section entitled “Legal Practises of General Application”. It states:

In addition to rules stated in Acts of general application, there are also a number of important principles that form part of the legal system. They operate in much the same way and must also be taken into account in developing legislative proposals. The following are examples of these principles:

the rules of natural justice and procedural fairness, which require that a person whose rights or interests are affected by an administrative decision be given a reasonable notice of the proposed decision and an opportunity to be heard by an unbiased decision maker;

I do not want to take too much more time but I will now turn to the issue at hand, namely, that, in the context of this legislation, my privileges have been violated due to the expectation that I will be required to engage in and cast a vote upon legislation that begins from the premise of a deliberate and overt violation of statutes passed by the House with the expectation that those provisions would be respected most of all by members of the House.

I will quote from page 140 of the *House of Commons Procedure and Practice*, second edition. It states:

The purpose of raising matters of “privilege” in either House of Parliament is to maintain the respect and credibility due to and required of each House in respect of these privileges, to uphold [the laws of Parliament].

In his reference to the Speaker, the government House leader attempted to claim that the question of privilege I have raised has been disposed of by rulings of previous Speakers. For example, he referenced the decision of Speaker Milliken on May 13, 2003, at pages 6123 and 6124 of *Debates*. Speaker Milliken, in that decision, reminded the House that the issue before him concerned an issue of regulatory authority, stating at page 6123:

I am unable to find a case where any Speaker has ruled that a government, in the exercise of a regulatory power conferred upon it by statute, has been found to have breached the privileges of the House.

Note should be taken, though, of the fact that the matter I have raised relates not to a question of regulatory authority, but rather to the matter as to whether my privileges have been violated as a result of the government tabling legislation in direct contravention to statute passed by Parliament.

I would also note that the reference made by the government House leader to the decision of Speaker Milliken on March 13, 2005 at page 4498-4500 was in relation to an issue of government reorganization in the wake of the defeat of specific legislation. Again, my point being that the decision sought was not in relation to the matter before the House and the citation of this matter as precedent is not applicable.

I would conclude by quoting from page 262 of *House of Commons Procedure and Practice*, second edition. It states:



*Government Orders***GOVERNMENT ORDERS***[English]*

Determining what is or is not a precedent is not always straightforward. Speaker Fraser once said that "a precedent is something that happened once upon a time and that everyone decided to follow. ... [I]n legal terms, it is usually the consequence of a decision made after argument has been proffered to the Chair ... on a certain point". The mere occurrence of an event does not make it a precedent, and Speakers have on occasion ruled that a special circumstance justifies a deviation from a known precedent.

● (1530)

I will conclude by repeating the point I raised yesterday. I submit that to place this legislation before the House and to seek the support of the House will require members of the House to endorse legislation that begins from a premise that contravenes the existing law and, thus, places members of the House in an untenable and unacceptable position.

**The Speaker:** I see the hon. government House leader is rising. I do not know if I need to hear anything more but if he feels he has something pertinent to add I will allow him a few moments.

**Hon. Peter Van Loan (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, CPC):** I assure you, Mr. Speaker, that I will be brief, and what I say may be obvious.

The issue in question was a question of whether the Speaker should be making decisions on the constitutionality or legality of proposed legislation before the Speaker. We cited numerous decisions of Speakers' previously, precedents that indicate that should not be the practice of the Speaker. Rulings should not go in that territory.

My friend said that he would cite some precedents but then produced absolutely no precedents whatsoever that contradict that. In fact, the argument that he made was that you, Mr. Speaker, should rely on the principle that you can make new rulings, that you can carve new law or write new law on how Parliament should work.

However, he then said that that should be done under the principles of natural justice that prevail in this Parliament. If we were to follow his route, there are two fundamental principles of natural justice that would be offended. The first of those is the fettering of the discretion of this Parliament. The member is suggesting that this Parliament is now free to legislate on issues because a previous Parliament has legislated on them and, therefore, we are prohibited from legislating the same questions or, if I may, changing the laws that were made in the past. That would be fettering the discretion of this Parliament in a way that totally would offend the principles of natural justice.

The second is that his approach would result in a delegation of the ability of this Parliament to make decisions to individuals outside of this Parliament, effectively giving them the power to legislate the law of this land rather than Parliament doing so. That kind of discretion would not be legal. It would offend the principles of natural justice.

For those reasons, even on the arguments that the member put forward to you, Mr. Speaker, for why you should carve new law, the fundamental basis for them is lacking and you should not do so.

● (1535)

**The Speaker:** I thank hon. members for their further representations. I can assure the House I will get back to them in due course.

**MARKETING FREEDOM FOR GRAIN FARMERS ACT**

**Hon. Gerry Ritz (Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food and Minister for the Canadian Wheat Board, CPC)** moved that Bill C-18, An Act to reorganize the Canadian Wheat Board and to make consequential and related amendments to certain Acts, be read the second time and referred to a committee.

He said: Mr. Speaker, I welcome this opportunity on behalf of western Canadian farmers to open debate on the bill that we are putting before the House that would give them marketing freedom very similar to what farmers have been enjoying in Ontario already for some years.

The Government of Canada, under the strong leadership of Prime Minister Stephen Harper, is very proud to be leading the way toward a bright future for Canadian farmers and for the overall Canadian economy—

**The Deputy Speaker:** Order, please. I am sure the hon. minister will want to refrain from using the name of sitting members.

**Hon. Gerry Ritz:** Madam Speaker, we are just so darned proud of him but I will say the Prime Minister.

We believe that all Canadian farmers should be able to position their businesses to capture the marketing opportunities that will be open to them. We live in a free country and giving farmers the freedom to choose is the right thing to do.

Currently, by law, western Canadian wheat, durum and barley growers do not have the same rights as other producers in Canada about where and how they sell their products. For export or domestic human consumption, they have no other option but to market through the Canadian Wheat Board, the monopoly that was established in 1943 by an order in council, not by producers or for producers at that time.

By allowing marketing freedom, western wheat and barley growers will be able to market based on what is best for their own bottom line of their own business. In the June 2011 Speech from the Throne, we again stated our commitment to ensure that western farmers would have the freedom to sell wheat and barley on the open market. With this proposed legislation, we would provide marketing choice to western grain farmers once and for all.

To avoid market disruption, the goal is for farmers and grain marketers, including the new entity, to be able to start forward contracting in January 2012. Farmers, grain companies and customers need this assurance. As we well know, market certainty and clarity underpins stability in the marketplace domestically and internationally.

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The bill would remove the monopoly of the Canadian Wheat Board and allow for the new Canadian wheat board to continue as a voluntary marketing organization for up to five years as it makes the transition to full private entity. During the transition period, this new voluntary organization would still be called the Canadian wheat board. It would continue to offer farmers the option of pooling their crops. It would continue to benefit from a borrowing guarantee backed by the federal government and it would develop a business plan for privatization, which will be reviewed no later than 2016.

This new freedom is not only good for farmers, it also has many economic benefits for communities across western Canada. New processing plants would be able to open their doors for business and look to hire new employees unfettered by the current ridiculous requirement to buy wheat and barley only from the Canadian Wheat Board.

Canada's grain industry is a powerhouse that brings \$16 billion to the farm gate and makes up almost half of our agricultural exports. What was once Canada's signature crop, hard red spring wheat, has fallen behind. Wheat and barley innovation has become stagnant. Competition for acres has weakened and newer crops, such as canola, have surpassed wheat in value.

A C.D. Howe report released this past spring confirmed that Canada's share of annual worldwide wheat production has fallen by 50% in the last 50 years. It is a staggering number. Equally, Canadian market share and world barley exports have declined by 40% since the 1980s. With the reduced market share, the Canadian Wheat Board has less influence on the world stage and, as a result, has become a price taker.

We have seen tremendous growth in value added opportunities across the Prairies over the past 20 years for crops that do not have a monopoly marketer, including oats, pulses, flax and, of course, canola. We would see these same opportunities open up for wheat and barley as we implement market freedom. We will work with farmers and industry to attract investment, encourage innovation, create value added jobs and build an overall stronger economy.

Our government has promised western Canadian wheat and barley growers that they will be given marketing freedom. We are fulfilling that commitment and ensuring that the market is finally controlled by the experts in the grain industry, our farmers.

The Canadian Wheat Board was first imposed on western Canadian farmers when times were different, to say the very least, difficult. Canadians had just gone through the Great Depression, World War II was raging and Canada was committed to supplying wheat to Britain. It was 1943 when farmers were forced to sell through the board. It was done with the aim of aiding the war effort, not with any pretense that it would be good for farmers.

So what has changed since then? Just about everything down on the farm.

For starters, it is now 2011, not 1943. Our government remains focused on economic stability and creating the right conditions for more long-term jobs and stronger economic growth, all the while steadily eliminating the deficit and returning to surplus. Our workforce is healthy and our agricultural industry is helping to drive our economy.

Unfortunately, the one thing that has not changed is that prairie farmers are still forced by law to sell their wheat, durum and barley through the Canadian Wheat Board.

The government's position is clear: our long-standing commitment that we are now delivering on is to promise and provide marketing choice. This is why we want to continue to have the Canadian Wheat Board in place as a choice for those who want to continue marketing through the board.

● (1540)

For too long, barley and durum processors have been setting up shop south of the border because they could not take the red tape here in Canada.

Those who are looking for an economic analysis need only listen to the Canadian Chamber of Commerce when it says:

The current single-desk model restricts valued added investment in wheat and barley, significantly detracting the ability of farmers and industry to respond to market demands and earn a premium return in recognition of the innovation provided, including innovation in value-added processing.

That is quite a statement.

Look at what happened to oats when it came out from under the monopoly. In Manitoba alone the acreage of oats has increased by over 250,000 acres since its removal from the Wheat Board's control.

This has allowed for the opening and expansion of Can-oat, a processing mill in Portage La Prairie. A half a million tonnes a year of oats run through that facility. These are the types of value-added industries and jobs that exist when farmers have the option to market their products as they so choose.

The transition to marketing freedom will have an impact on the Port of Churchill, since the CWB was responsible for nearly 90% of all goods shipped through the port in 2010. Our government is taking concrete steps to help ensure the Port of Churchill will remain a viable option for exports.

The Government of Canada remains committed to Churchill, and we understand the importance of economic development and diversification to the community, the region and the overall north.

The government also acknowledges that the changes to the Canadian Wheat Board, while giving farmers marketing freedom, will also lead to a period of adjustment for Churchill and the surrounding region. That is why we are taking necessary steps to support the community and the port through this transition.

The government will provide an economic incentive of up to \$5 million per year during the five year transition period to support shipments of grain, including now oil seeds, pulses and special crops through the port.



Working with the port owner, Transport Canada will invest more than \$4 million to repair the existing port assets and support the safe docking of vessels. This will also enable the port to remain in sound operating condition to take advantage of future business opportunities, and could create jobs resulting in economic benefits to the community over the next three years.

Western Economic Diversification Canada will work with the Churchill Gateway Development Corporation on port infrastructure improvements, and extend the project completion date an additional two years, from 2013 to 2015. Additionally, the government will continue to explore initiatives to support the ongoing operations of the port.

We recognize that this is a major change for agriculture in western Canada. That is why we have been consulting extensively with stakeholders from across the supply chain, from the farm gate to seaport.

Over the summer, a working group comprising experts in the field heard a broad range of advice on how the grain marketing and transportation system could transition from the current CWB-run system to an open market that includes voluntary marketing pools.

The working group's report covers a wide range of issues from transportation to research to elevators, basically the how of moving to an open market. The basic thrust is to let markets work, but monitor them to ensure that effective competition prevails. The working group is one of many ways the government is seeking advice on how to move forward.

One of its recommendation deals with the issue of the advance payments program. This is a very popular tool farmers use to maintain their cash flow during the production season. The APP has always been delivered on behalf of Agriculture Canada by delivery agents. In order for the new CWB to focus 100% on the marketing of grain for those farmers who choose to use it, the Canadian Canola Grower Association will now administer the APP for wheat and barley, starting with the spring 2012 advance program. Canadian canola growers have great expertise and 30 years experience in administering these cash advances.

As a result of the change, many farmers will have their administrative burden reduced as they deal with fewer organizations, not to mention a potential reduction in their administration fee. Wheat and barley farmers will continue to have access to this program without disruption.

Canada's wheat and barley producers constantly adapt their operations to the evolving economic and weather realities, and their ability to secure cash flows is an essential part of their ongoing business decisions. Our government is taking clear and concise action so that wheat and barley farmers will continue to have access to the advance payments program during and after this transition to an open market.

With regard to the issue of producer cars, the reality is that the board's monopoly has never provided producer cars. The right to producer cars is set out in the Canada Grain Act, and producer cars have always been allocated by the Canadian Grain Commission, and the Wheat Board's only role was to charge a fee for the use of a

producer car. Our government will continue to protect farmers' access to them.

Similarly, the fact is that short line railways and farmer-owned inland terminals succeed in their businesses on the basis of their management skills and the value they offer producers. They will continue to offer savings to farmers without the CWB monopoly. To suggest that they depend on a monopoly, forcing farmers to deal with them, is an insult to the people who operate these businesses.

These same groups offer professional and economically beneficial services to producers for non-board crops now, and they are doing very well at it.

● (1545)

The government is committed to improving rail service for agricultural shippers. The government completed the rail service review and we announced our follow-up actions in the spring of last year.

As for jobs, while the board will see some job losses initially, the future for employment in the grains sectors looks bright. We can expect more processors to start up new businesses in western Canada. Private marketers of wheat and barley will expand their workforces. The Western Grain Elevator Association members are already calling for and interviewing people to handle the increase it expects. Some have even committed to numbers that they will require in this new free setting.

Milling firms will be able to purchase directly from the farmer of their choice at a price and a timeframe they negotiate. Entrepreneurs will have the option of starting up their own specialty flour mills, malting and pasta plants. In fact, just recently, we had the honour of turning the sod on a new pasta plant in Regina. Murad Al-Katib of Alliance Grain Traders, born and raised in Davidson, Saskatchewan, has been selling Canadian pulses worldwide. The company also manufactures pasta in Turkey, but has stayed out of the Canadian market because of the monopoly and all the red tape involved in dealing directly with durum producers. This is a \$50 million private sector investment that will create 60 permanent jobs and 200 construction jobs. He is unequivocal in saying that this would not happen without these changes. That is great news for Saskatchewan and it is great news for farmers overall. I know that there are more to come.

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My colleagues on the opposite side of the floor unfortunately remain steadfast against these opportunities of an open market. Even more amazing about this opposition is that only a tiny fraction of their members represent anyone in the wheat board area. All of them are from city ridings. The official agriculture critics, both from Ontario, seem to think that they have the right to tell western grain farmers that they do not have the right to market their own wheat and barley as their own constituents do.

In the Ontario example, we made the announcement yesterday at Don Kenny of Blondehead Farms. He is the chair of the Ontario grain producers. We also had in attendance, Barry Senft, who is the president and CEO of the Ontario wheat board. They both recommend this change. They did it in 2003 and have never looked back.

My colleagues understand we are turning a page in our nation's great history and we will all be better for it. Exciting new opportunities lie ahead for our grain industry. The government is pleased to receive the support of this initiative from three of the four provinces shackled by the monopoly. Saskatchewan, Alberta and British Columbia produce over 90% of western Canada's wheat, durum and barley.

The agriculture minister from Saskatchewan said:

Saskatchewan farmers spend their own hard-earned money on land, machinery and inputs to grow their own crops, so why shouldn't they have the marketing freedom to decide how, when, and to whom they sell their grain?

Alberta's agriculture and rural development minister said:

Marketing opportunities are being lost every day and it's vital that Alberta's grain producers be able to market their product to anyone they choose.

As well, the agriculture minister for British Columbia said:

Every farmer in Western Canada deserves the right to sell their grain when, to whom and for the price that works best for their farm business.

The government is giving western Canadian farmers nothing more than their right to manage their own businesses their own way. While we welcome constructive debate, frivolous delays will only hurt our farmers and the overall grain industry.

We owe it to producers to provide market certainty so they can continue to plan their businesses. Farmers must plan for the 2012-2013 year. They are already putting inputs in the ground, getting ready. When they are making seeding decisions they will want to know what the marketing system will be for that 2012 crop.

Canada will continue to sell wheat and barley and maintain its reputation as a quality, reliable supplier. The international grain trade works largely on forward contracting for future purchases and sales. If there is uncertainty in the market about the rules of who can sell Canadian wheat and barley, there is a high risk that buyers will turn to other countries to buy that wheat and barley.

The Canadian wheat and barley sector can continue to supply domestic and world markets with high quality wheat and barley, but they look to us to provide the certainty they need to plan and carry out their business decisions.

I invite my colleagues in the House to join us as we work to ensure that all farmers across Canada can position their businesses to capture the opportunities of the future.

• (1550)

**Mr. Pat Martin (Winnipeg Centre, NDP):** Madam Speaker, I have a number of questions for the minister because there has been such a preponderance of misinformation circulated by him and his office that some of it begs for clarity in this brief opportunity we have to debate this staggeringly complicated change he is making to the rural prairie economy.

First, I would like to ask the minister if he would clarify what he meant yesterday when he said that he has never seen a report from the CWB. At least on television he would have the public believe that the Canadian Wheat Board would not submit reports to the minister, as it is required to do. I know that I have seen the reports and I wonder why the minister has not or if he wants to correct the statement that he made.

Second, I know that when legislation goes through the process of development, a cost analysis is done to any piece of legislation, no matter what it is, and presented to the Treasury Board. We have never seen any cost benefit analysis of this piece of legislation. He owes it to Parliament and the general public to take this opportunity to tell us the cost implications.

Finally, in the same vein of costing, we have seen a private independent estimate by Peat Marwick that it would cost as much as \$500 million in closing costs to terminate the CWB. A \$6 billion a year corporation does not just disappear without significant closing costs. Contracts may be terminated and the contracts for ships that are being partly built may be terminated.

Will he tell us the government's estimate? What is it going to cost the government to destroy the Canadian Wheat Board? I would like answers to the other two questions as well.

**Hon. Gerry Ritz:** Madam Speaker, I stand behind my statement that I have never seen the reports that I have asked for from the Canadian Wheat Board. It is supposed to, on a monthly basis, report to the minister of the day on what it has sold, who it has sold it to, the value of the sale, the shipping, and all of the transactions. I have never seen those. It does not seem to be able to provide those in a way that says it is getting a premium price. I have never seen those. Maybe the member opposite has an inside track, being the eager beaver that he is, but I have never seen them.

As to cost analysis, the member opposite talked about misinformation and that it has to be presented, and that type of thing. Farmers have done the cost analysis for years. As I said in my opening remarks, we have lost 50% of our wheat and 40% of our barley. What is the cost of that loss out there on the world market?



The one good thing the board has done in its intransigence is allowed for world-class canola, mustard, flax and oats. All the other commodities outside of the board have flourished. We are seeing processing, global demand increase and new varieties being developed. There is a great cost benefit in that the board not moving as it should has benefited the other sectors, to the point where now canola is king on the Prairies and will continue to be. We have crushing facilities. The misnomer that one cannot process at point of production and it has to be done at point of sale is put to the lie by the canola crushers that are popping up across the Prairies. We are also seeing the durum plant going in Regina. I know the member for Wascana will be celebrating that because a lot of those people live in his riding.

The member talked about the study that was done. It was KPMG, actually, and not Peat Marwick. The numbers I have seen on that one are so staggering in scope as to be unbelievable in the spread on some of them. He talked about the ships. There was no consultation with farmers on that. They are scooping money out of the farm pools without even asking farmers if they can do it. That is ridiculous. That is one of the reasons farmers have moved away.

• (1555)

**Mr. Frank Valeriote (Guelph, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, I have two questions for the minister, but I would first request that he resist belittling the efforts of urban members of Parliament who know where their food comes from. We know that food comes from farmers and we are here defending the well-being of western Canadian farmers.

My two questions are as follows, very quickly. We know that he does not respect the opinion of opposition members and we know he does not respect the opinion of farmers who have expressed it in a plebiscite. Would he respect an objective opinion from *The Economist* magazine that said recently:

Smaller producers, faced with mounting marketing costs, will inevitably have to sell their farms to bigger rivals or agribusiness companies...devastating small prairie towns, whose economies depend on individual farmers with disposable income.

**Hon. Gerry Ritz:** Madam Speaker, what I find to be hypocritical is that the member from Ontario, and good for him that he was elected, wants to deny my farmers the same rights and privileges that his farmers enjoy now. How can he stand in his place and do that? This is about fairness.

When he talks about the smaller producers who are in jeopardy, I make the argument that they will be in jeopardy if we continue down this line. These same small producers have become experts at marketing their canola, mustard, oats and flax. They have moved to other commodities. Certainly, they grow wheat because in the west we are using a zero-till process and need good rotational crops to fight the weed systems, chemicals and the like that are in the soil. That is great. However, we are not using wheat, durum and barley to the same extent that we used to. Now we are using triticale, canaryseed and many other products to fill the gap because of the intransigence and the changes that have not been allowed regarding the western Canadian Wheat Board. That is one of the reasons we are moving.

**Mr. Randy Hoback (Prince Albert, CPC):** Madam Speaker, this is obviously a great day for Canadian farmers. I am so excited. I want to thank the minister and the parliamentary secretary for all of

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their hard work. On this day I think of men like Rick Strankman, Jim Ness and the late Art Walde and all the battles they have fought.

Would the minister explain what options and opportunities the farmers will have once the legislation is passed?

**Hon. Gerry Ritz:** Madam Speaker, like me, the member's background is in agriculture and his heart and passion are still there.

This issue is what has brought many of us to the floor of the House of Commons to ensure that we move forward.

Art Walde, whose name the member mentioned, was a good friend of mine. I attended Art's funeral. This was Art's lifeblood. His family insisted that I continue on with this fight and move forward on this issue to ensure that his son who is now farming would have the opportunity to run his own business in his own way and sell his own commodities.

We will get that done.

**Ms. Linda Duncan (Edmonton—Strathcona, NDP):** Madam Speaker, I heard the minister in the House and in the media last night say that the government is speaking for Canadians and Canadian farmers.

What I find puzzling is that when I spoke to the prairie agricultural associations, I heard something different. For example, the Agricultural Producers Association of Saskatchewan is dead set against shutting down the Wheat Board and is absolutely appalled that the government did not uphold the majority vote of farmers. It stated:

Producers have now sent a very clear message to government....So if government chooses to ignore the message and we do see the loss of the single desk, we're concerned about the transitional issues that will result.

The Wild Rose Agricultural Producers of Alberta, Alberta's largest producer-funded general farm organization, is expressing strong opposition to shutting down the Wheat Board. The Canadian Federation of Agriculture is expressing strong opposition to the shutting down of the Wheat Board. The National Farmers Union, which has been in existence for many years in this country, is opposing this move by the government.

Who exactly is the government representing?

• (1600)

**Hon. Gerry Ritz:** Madam Speaker, it is unfortunate the member has not broadened that scope to the real farmers in western Canada. The western wheat and barley growers, the Grain Growers of Canada and the Canadian Cattlemen's Association all support this initiative that we are moving forward on. As I outlined in my remarks earlier, so do the provincial governments, such as British Columbia because of the Peace River area, Alberta and Saskatchewan, where 85% to 90% of the Canadian Wheat Board commodities are grown.

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Manitoba is against it. That is because of the NDP philosophy that we should all be locked into mediocrity; nobody moves, nobody gets hurt.

We are beyond that. These farmers know how to run their businesses. They are looking forward to their marketing freedom. We will get it done.

**Mr. Pat Martin (Winnipeg Centre, NDP):** Madam Speaker, I thank the House for this opportunity to speak at second reading of Bill C-18.

The bill is a mistake in the making. We are watching a terrible economic mistake unfold before our very eyes. I must admit that there is a feeling of helplessness on this side because the Conservatives have chosen to use their majority to ram this change through to the rural prairie economic base without even consulting with farmers or allowing them the vote that they are guaranteed through legislation.

I preface my remarks by correcting one thing. The minister would have us believe that the May 2, 2011 general election was a referendum on the future of the Wheat Board. He would also have us believe that by virtue of the fact that the election was won by a majority it satisfies the condition of the Wheat Board legislation that guarantees farmers the right to vote on the future of the Wheat Board. I categorically reject that point of view.

I received telephone calls from prairie farmers in Saskatchewan and Manitoba who told me they had voted Conservative because of some other aspect they liked about the Conservative Party platform, which is their right to do. They also said that just because they elected that government it did not give the Conservatives the right to abolish the Wheat Board. They had understood that through the legislation they had been promised an opportunity to vote on it.

The minister has denied farmers the right to vote on how they would market their grain in the future. Therefore, when the minister stands and says he is giving farmers more marketing choice, if he is serious about letting farmers choose how to market their grain, why in God's name will he not let them vote on the issue? It is their democratic right.

If the minister is confident and believes his own rhetoric that the world would be a better place for farmers if they did away with the single desk monopoly of the Wheat Board, then why will he not put it to farmers for a vote? He claims he has the support of the majority of farmers on this issue. Why is he afraid of putting it to a democratic vote?

There has only been one genuine consultation with farmers on this issue. In the absence of a vote being sponsored by the government, the Canadian Wheat Board hired an independent third party and undertook a properly constructed vote using a fair question and fair methodology. As a result, 22,000 Canadian prairie grain farmers voted in favour of keeping the single desk monopoly. That is 62% of prairie grain producers. I was disappointed as I thought the numbers would be higher. We had estimated that about 75% of prairie grain producers supported the single desk monopoly. Nonetheless, 62% is a clear majority on that question.

There is no other form of consultation that is fair. The minister said that when he goes home and talks to farmers they tell him that

they want to get rid of the Wheat Board. That does not constitute a scientific survey of the opinions of prairie farmers.

There is no business case for abolishing the Canadian Wheat Board. If there were it would have been tabled in the House along with the legislation. We are dealing with a notion here. We are dealing with the personal opinion of the Minister of Agriculture, who believes that we should abolish the single desk monopoly. I have empirical evidence to show that his view is that of the minority.

I also have well-documented and independently analyzed empirical evidence which shows that the Canadian Wheat Board has provided the best possible price for Canadian farmers year after year. As well, it has minimized their risks. It has provided both of those functions and many others which I will discuss if time permits.

The minister talked about offering farmers certainty, stability and clarity over the next farming year. In actual fact he is being reckless and irresponsible. At a time of economic uncertainty within the country, he is turning the rural prairie economy upside down on its head. There is no guarantee or certainty that the next farming year will provide a stable marketplace for grain farmers' products. There would be no underwriting and guarantees which are presently associated with the Wheat Board on pricing, on shipping capacity and on marketing capacity. All of that is now up in the air.

● (1605)

The minister would have us believe that farmers were better off in the 1920s when they were being gouged by the robber barons and the railway barons. The very reason farmers pooled together to act collectively was to protect themselves from the abuse of the powers that be, those people who held power over the farmers. That is how the Wheat Board evolved. That is how it graduated to being the largest and most successful grain marketing company in the world. It is a great Canadian institution wholly owned and operated by Canadian farmers. It is a brilliant concept.

It works so well that it irritates the heck out of our American neighbours. For years they have been trying to destroy the Canadian Wheat Board because they know it is a huge advantage for Canadian farmers, so much so that they claim it constitutes an unfair trading subsidy and violates international trade agreements. The U.S. filed 13 separate complaints first with the GATT and then with its successor the WTO. The WTO ruled 13 times that there is nothing unfair about Canadian farmers acting collectively to sell their products and look out for their own interests by commanding the best possible prices.

It is hard enough being a farmer with the droughts, floods, pestilence and all the other challenges farmers face. That is now coupled with the economic uncertainty of the 2011 Canadian economy. It boggles my mind that the minister would follow his own ideology, in spite of the empirical evidence to the contrary, and would throw this spanner into the economy of the three prairie provinces.



It worries me when ideology trumps reason, logic, economics, research and empirical evidence. It is a terrible thing to be setting policy by the notions of a failed ostrich rider. The man does not speak from any authority as a grain farmer; he raises ostriches in North Battleford. He criticizes my colleague for being from the good city of Guelph. He criticizes me for living in the good city of Winnipeg. Only he is being driven by this notion, which is a weak notion at that.

There is a great deal of collateral damage associated with the dismantling of the Canadian Wheat Board. The downtown area of Winnipeg that I represent has become the world centre of excellence for grain. That is not only because of its marketing capacity. It is a \$6 billion a year corporation, the head office of which is in my riding. It ships 20 million tonnes of class A, the best grain in the world, from Canada.

It has also created the Canadian International Grains Institute, a satellite campus of grain excellence that does research and development funded by the Canadian Wheat Board. It develops and customizes new strains and product lines to fit the markets where the Wheat Board promotes our grain. The Canadian Grain Commission sets the grain quality standards so that we can continue to enjoy our reputation for having the highest quality grain in the world.

All of that will be lost. We will no longer be the centre of excellence. The big grain companies and private grain companies came Winnipeg because it is the centre of excellence and set up their headquarters next to the Canadian Wheat Board. They will no longer need to keep their head offices in Canada once the Wheat Board disappears, which it will because this notion of a voluntary wheat board with dual marketing is a pure chimera. It is a myth.

As a diversion, I will tell the House why it is plainly a myth. If the initial price for grain offered by a voluntary wheat board was higher than the market price there would be no orders. People would go to the market for grain. If the initial price offered was lower than the market price, it would have all of the orders but would have to sell the grain at a loss. That is a recipe for bankruptcy. It is exactly what happened in Australia.

● (1610)

When Johnny Howard, our Prime Minister's Australian counterpart, had the same brain fart of an idea that the Australian wheat board should be privatized. It lasted exactly three years as a voluntary board once its monopoly was taken away and it went bankrupt. Sure enough, that market share went into the hands of the private grain companies, the multinational agrifood businesses, which wanted to control the food supply system from seed to final retail production. They wanted it all. Believe me, they have been salivating over this market segment for 75 years.

The Conservative government is going to do the Americans' dirty work for them and hand them that market share on a silver platter, without any consideration of the best interests of the very grain producers who it is duty bound and honour bound to represent. It is amazing that the Canadian Wheat Board should finally crash because it has been sabotaged by the minister, a rat in the woodpile. The minister is undermining the very institution that he is honour bound by his office to uphold and be the champion of. He is not

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supposed to be the saboteur of the Wheat Board; he is supposed to be the champion of the Wheat Board. There is an enemy within. The Canadian farmers have elected an enemy.

The implications are profound for the prairie economy if the Canadian Wheat Board disappears.

I will dwell briefly on the economic impact just for the city of Winnipeg, because it is the area I represent. A PricewaterhouseCoopers study in 2005 estimated the gross output of the CWB impact in Winnipeg at \$94.6 million. There are 400 employees in its head office. The spin-off employment of the CWB is estimated at more than 2,000 jobs. At the provincial level, the CWB gross output contribution is another \$323 million, with more than 3,000 jobs of a total labour-income impact of more than \$140 million. I cannot tell the members how frustrated we are.

I would like to deal with some of the corresponding collateral damage, as I am calling it. For the Port of Churchill, the minister has now come up with \$5 million a year for five years to offset the impact on the Port of Churchill. I read that as an acknowledgement that the Wheat Board no longer shipping its grain through Churchill would have a profound impact. However, it begs the question of why he is so eager to abolish the Canadian Wheat Board when it will cost him a minimum of \$25 million in impacts that the government otherwise would not have to shell out. It is money it does not have, I might had. It has to borrow every penny that it shovels into this.

As to the closing costs, I asked the minister this question. What would it cost to shut down a \$6 billion a year corporation, the most successful and largest grain marketing company in the world? KPMG, an independent authority, estimated as much as \$500 million. It would have to pay severance to all the employees. It would have to deal with contracts that had been signed for the delivery of grain, that now would be broken. It would have to dismantle overseas marketing offices.

The average layperson does not understand the marketing network we have established here. It is magnificent and that is why it is so successful. Now the government will borrow \$500 million on the open market. I do not know where that kind of money is borrowed from these days. That is just to fulfill this free market flight of fancy of that minister who got into politics specifically to abolish the Canadian Wheat Board.

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I remember when he was the assistant to Elwin Hermanson, whom the Conservatives have happily put in charge of the grain commission, again, infiltrating these organizations to destroy them and collapse them from within. The minister has breathed, eaten and slept abolishing the Canadian Wheat Board ever since he came to Ottawa. Now, in spite of reason, logic, economics and empirical evidence, he is hell-bound and determined to do the dirty deed and abolish what we believe is a great Canadian institution.

● (1615)

It would not be paranoid to presume that this is part of a pattern. Every time there is a trade advantage to Canada, those guys feel compelled to sacrifice it and give it up, such as the softwood lumber agreement. When the Americans came breathing down our necks, telling us we were enjoying far too much advantage in that industry, we forfeited.

When it comes to the Wheat Board and when it becomes evident that we do it better, what do we do? We give it up and forfeit it. We yield to the bullies in an international trade situation and give up our advantage.

We do not have champions here; we have cowards in giving up so readily, and again, driven by ideology and not by anything else.

As I close, I would like to move an amendment. I move:

That the motion be amended by deleting all of the words after the word "That" and substituting the following:

"this House declines to give second reading to Bill C-18, an act to reorganize the Canadian Wheat Board and to make consequential and related amendments to certain acts, because it:

(a) fails to respect the will of the majority of prairie farmers who have expressed a desire to maintain the current composition and structure of the Canadian Wheat Board;

(b) ignores the fact that the Canadian Wheat Board is funded, controlled, and directed by Canadian farmers and removes their autonomy to maximize prices and minimize risks in the western wheat and barley market; and

(c) makes sweeping decisions on behalf of prairie farmers by eliminating the single-desk system that has provided prairie farmers with strength and stability for nearly 70 years.

**The Deputy Speaker:** The motion is in order.

Questions and comments, the hon. member for Guelph.

**Mr. Frank Valeriote (Guelph, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, I have been on the Standing Committee on Agriculture and Agri-Food for three years now and wheat farmers have been before the committee on many occasions. We continually ask them, in their opinion, why manufacturers have not begun to build pasta plants out west. They say, almost unanimously, that they do not want to do this because of the distance from their markets, not because of the Canadian Wheat Board.

However, now that the Wheat Board is on its deathbed, they have said, through the Alliance Grain Traders Inc., only now will they open a pasta plant in Saskatchewan. In one of its reports it said, "Margin erosion is combated by negotiating lower prices from growers".

Does the member believe the plant will go in there now because it knows it will pay less for its grain, and it will be at the expense of Canadian farmers? What delusion is the minister under to think farmers are going to do better by getting rid of the Wheat Board?

● (1620)

**Mr. Pat Martin:** Madam Speaker, studies have indicated that abolishing the Canadian Wheat Board would take hundreds of millions of dollars out of the pockets of prairie producers and put them into the pockets of the shareholders of the private grain companies. People should remember that the Canadian Wheat Board is a non-profit organization. It is not even allowed to retain assets or income. All returns have to be returned to the producer. The profit margin will go to the big grain companies. In the case of this new pasta plant, it is salivating. It anticipates it will be able to get its grain cheaper, which means farmers will earn less.

While I am on my feet, let me also deal with an issue that the minister raised. He said that the only reason the pasta plant was being built was because the product would be value-added and that would happen more. In actual fact, in western Canada milling capacity has increased 11% from 2001 to 2011 and four new mills have been built in western Canada in 2011 compared to 10 years ago. Four new mills happened under the current situation, whereas in North Dakota there was not one new mill. In fact, the number of mills remained static.

Entrepreneurs could in fact add value to the raw product in Canada under the current system. The fact that they did not may be due to many reasons. However, the minister is misleading Canadians if he is saying that this is going to be a free market nirvana now and all of these mills are going to sprout out of the ground like mushrooms. It simply is not true.

**Mr. David Anderson (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Natural Resources and for the Canadian Wheat Board, CPC):**

Madam Speaker, one of the disadvantages both members opposite have is coming late to the discussion. I guess neither of them is aware of the failures of the pasta plant projects that tried to take place in western Canada, but were shut down because the Wheat Board would not allow producers to even use their own grain. It would not allow them to sell to the producers. I guess the member opposite did not know that.

We certainly would welcome a new pasta plant there. According to the logic of the Liberals, it would seem that we should shut down every factory in Canada if we want to protect the prices of our natural resources, which is ridiculous. I do not know where they are coming from in even making a suggestion like that.

I want to ask the member one thing. I talked to some Winnipeg-based businesses that do marketing for farmers in some of the specialty crops. They told me they had around 1,000 customers right now and they were absolutely thrilled that they would have the opportunity. They said that the problem for them would be accessing enough employees to do the work when moving from 1,000 to potentially 15,000 customers.

Why is he not prepared to support the Winnipeg businesses that really see this as an opportunity?



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**Mr. Pat Martin:** Madam Speaker, it gives me an opportunity to answer the question that the member should have asked, which is, What is going to happen to Canadian wheat as a commodity? I can answer that question for him. Canadian wheat, which has a reputation around the world as the highest quality and maintained as such by the work of the Canadian Wheat Board and its quality control, will be lost as a Canadian commodity because it will be blended.

When the big agrifood and grain companies take over and we sell our number one grade, fine quality Canadian wheat, it will be mixed with some substandard wheat from somewhere else in the United States and will be sold offshore that way. Our customers are going to lose their confidence in the Canadian product if we cannot maintain the highest standards that we currently enjoy and the reputation that we earned stemming from that.

• (1625)

**Mr. Alex Atamanenko (British Columbia Southern Interior, NDP):** Madam Speaker, last night some of us were here in a debate trying to support democracy in Ukraine. It seems ironic that we are now witnessing the erosion of democracy in our own country.

I have before me a communiqué from the Canadian Wheat Board Alliance, a non-partisan group, in support of the Canadian Wheat Board. It stated:

At a widely quoted election forum in Minnedosa, Manitoba, [the minister] said his party “respects the vote” of farmers who support the single desk and suggested there would not be any attempt to dismantle the Canadian Wheat Board unless a majority of producers vote for it.

He went on to say:

—until farmers make that change, I’m not prepared to work arbitrarily. They are absolutely right to believe in democracy. I do, too.

This was during the election. We get the spin that somehow, because many people voted for the Conservatives on the Prairies, this is the mandate. What about the fact that farmers are only 2% of the population spread over 57 western ridings? Claiming the Conservative Party has a mandate from farmers to change the Wheat Board is ridiculous. Most urban voters agree that farmers should decide this issue.

Would my colleague please comment on this?

**Mr. Pat Martin:** Madam Speaker, if we take the Conservatives at their word that they want to give more marketing choice to farmers, why do they not let them vote on it as the legislation demands and as the minister promised farmers?

He is being disingenuous, which perhaps is too kind a word, when he says that all western farmers want to do away with the Canadian Wheat Board. He certainly was disingenuous with the people of that area, saying, “Go ahead and vote Conservative. It does not mean it is a referendum on the Wheat Board”. Then he stood up on May 2 and said that he got a referendum on the Wheat Board.

The only way to test the merits of the argument of the Conservatives is to put it to farmers and let them decide.

If, on a fair question and a democratic vote, farmers say they want to do away with the Wheat Board even by 51%, the government will not hear another word from me or my colleagues in the NDP. We

would respect the democratic will of farmers, not ignore it and insult it the way the government has.

**Mr. Randy Hoback (Prince Albert, CPC):** Madam Speaker, this past summer supposedly the board sent out a plebiscite and it said it had 22,000 supporters. Would the hon. member tell me why it did not sign up acres in the 22,000 supporters? Could he explain to me why there is accredited exporters here in Ottawa saying they cannot source grain?

Why can the board not do both? Why can it not offer the grain from these 22,000 supporters to the people who are already marketing that grain on their behalf?

**Mr. Pat Martin:** Madam Speaker, I do not think my colleague should challenge the merits or the veracity of the plebiscite that took place. It was done by an independent third party. I am trying to remember if it was KPMG or PricewaterhouseCoopers. It was a clear question, a fair question. We did not need any Clarity Act on the question: “Do you want to maintain the single desk monopoly?” A clear majority of farmers voted to keep it.

We have to respect that. If one calls oneself a democrat, one has to respect the democratic will of people as clearly expressed in a fair and honest vote.

The Conservatives may be unwilling to uphold their obligation to farmers to conduct a vote as per the legislation, but the Canadian Wheat Board had one and the results were clear. We have to respect that. It is all about respect.

**Mr. Charlie Angus (Timmins—James Bay, NDP):** Madam Speaker, the Conservatives have misrepresented in the House when they said that Ontario farmers had a choice. Ontario farmers were given a vote. Their markets were completely different. There is a much smaller market into the United States as opposed to the massive distances covered by prairie farmers.

Why is it the hon. member thinks that the government is opposed to allowing farmers the right to vote?

**Mr. Pat Martin:** Madam Speaker, let me reiterate that if there were such a vote and the prairie farmers voted even by 51% or 50% plus one, that would be the last the House would hear about it from us.

If the farmers of Ontario voted to do away with the marketing system they had, that is their business; that is their right, just as it should be the right of prairie farmers to make that choice. It should not be arbitrarily imposed by a bunch of ideological zealots.

• (1630)

[Translation]

**The Deputy Speaker:** Before resuming debate, it is my duty, pursuant to Standing Order 38, to inform the House that the question to be raised tonight at the time of adjournment is as follows: the hon. member for Edmonton—Strathcona, Aboriginal Affairs.

*Government Orders*

[English]

**Mr. Frank Valeriote (Guelph, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, we should not even be debating Bill C-18 today. Alongside tens of thousands of western Canadian farmers, members on this side of the House await the plebiscite the Conservative government is legally required to hold under section 47.1 of the Canadian Wheat Board Act before it can apply its ideological scalpel to a Canadian institution that has been the backbone of grain farming across the Prairies for decades.

Nevertheless, if we have learned anything from the behaviour of the government in the early days of this Parliament, it is that its ministers are rolling out the greatest hits of the Reform Party. Throwing caution to the wind, it is stifling debate as much as possible and taking the rest of Canada along with it no matter who it negatively impacts.

Neither the Prime Minister nor the Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food has ever made much of a secret of their single-minded desire for the death of the single desk system. What they have kept from enquiring Canadians are the reasons they refuse to hold a plebiscite of the Wheat Board membership, or even why in March, heading into an election, the minister assured farmers that there was no reason to worry and that their opinions would be sought on the Wheat Board when it came forward in this Parliament.

Once it became clear that the minister had no intention of honouring his March pledge, the Canadian Wheat Board held its own plebiscite on the continued operation of the single desk under the Canadian Wheat Board. The results were clear. The majority of western Canadian grain farmers chose the stability, competitive advantage and clout, not just in Canada but overseas, that it enjoys due to its numbers brought together under a single desk.

In August 68,000 ballots were mailed out to farmers. Over the course of that month meetings were held across the Prairies and hundreds of farmers came in off the fields for meetings as harvest began simply to ensure their voices were heard. Farmers for both sides attended these meetings. They listened respectfully and made their points as to why they believed it should go or why it should stay.

I attended several of these meetings and was astonished, as were the organizers. Never before had they held a single meeting where over 500 farmers attended, such as the one in Saskatoon in early August. I set out to listen to the different viewpoints of various farmers and at one meeting was pulled aside by one farmer from the Saskatoon area. He said to me, and I will paraphrase because he used much more colourful language, "I haven't voted Liberal in the last thousand years and it's unlikely that I will in the next thousand years, but I certainly did not vote Conservative so that they could kill the Canadian Wheat Board".

I may not have changed his vote, but what he wanted to ensure was that someone in Ottawa was listening to him. Sadly, he could not go to his own MP because just when farmers are asking them to listen and represent the farmers' best interests, Conservative MPs are nowhere to be seen or heard. Not one. Not one single Conservative prairie MP has the courage to stand up and defend the rights of his or her constituents to hold a government-conducted plebiscite as mandated by section 47.1 of the act.

The Conservative Party only received 24% of eligible Canadian votes, which certainly does not constitute a mandate to run roughshod over the democratic rights of farmers to maintain their livelihoods under the Canadian Wheat Board Act.

Desperate to have their voices heard, farmers held their own plebiscite. The results of the plebiscite were unambiguous with a 56% response rate, a number similar to the turnout in many recent general elections and byelections, including in the minister's own riding. Sixty-two per cent of wheat producers and 51% of barley producers voted to retain their single-desk marketing and sales arm under the Canadian Wheat Board.

Regrettably, the minister simply dismissed the results as an expensive survey. Unfortunately, Canadians do not have the same opportunity to dismiss their muzzled prairie MPs' own election results similarly.

Many argue that with the fragile state of the world economy, the CWB is more important than ever before for the grain-exporting prairie provinces. The livelihoods of Canadian farmers and small businesses are at stake.

• (1635)

Recently even *The Economist* wrote that, concerned about the death of the single desk marketing system:

Smaller producers, faced with mounting marketing costs, will inevitably have to sell their farms to bigger rivals or agribusiness companies....devastating small prairie towns, whose economies depend on individual farmers with disposable income.

I have heard from farmers, even some who favour killing the Wheat Board, that thousands of farms managed by farmers whose age exceeds the average age of farmers in Canada, which is 58 years, are likely to close. With their closure so too will the small town and village economies supported by those farmers suffer. We risk seeing an end to a number of small towns in rural parts of our prairie provinces.

The board markets and sells on behalf of every wheat and grain producer in the Prairies to some 70 countries and 100 buyers across the world. Its unique position allows it to act as a price setter instead of a price taker.

In contrast to *The Economist*, the *Wall Street Journal* welcomed the impending demise of the Canadian Wheat Board noting, "more money goes back to farmers than under an open-market system," the open market system that the government is proposing. It went on to say:

Grain handlers such as Cargill Inc., Viterra Inc. and Bunge Ltd. could see their roles—and returns—in Canadian grain markets grow.

At whose expense? No one else other than our prairie wheat farmers. Recently in a report from Alliance Grain Traders Inc., which is conveniently only now opening a pasta plant in Saskatchewan, said its "margin erosion is combatted by negotiating lower prices from growers".



From my time on the Standing Committee on Agriculture and Agri-Food, I have learned that a major reason that pasta manufacturing has not been meaningfully undertaken in the west is it is too far distant from a market that would consume its products and transportation costs would be too great.

Now that the Canadian Wheat Board will be abolished, there is the opportunity to get the lowest possible price for grain from farmers who are no longer able to set the best possible price that will allow pasta manufacturers to offset the transportation costs of marketing their pasta, again at the expense of western Canadian farmers.

What is clear is that the protection of the family farm in the prairie provinces is not a priority under the Conservative government. It would prefer to create an environment that would see farmers fail than support an environment that protects the way of life for multitudes of farmers and their families whose way of life will be dramatically changed and not for the better.

For whom will they be changed? For the well-being of large agribusiness and foreign interests. Without the Canadian Wheat Board which returns excess profits to the pockets of farmers, the larger rail and grain companies that can sustain their own networks will finally have access to those farmers' profits. Their interest is not the well-being of farmers, but rather their own bottom line. Farmers will be left to bid one another down to the lowest possible price to sell their grain.

We know not only from studies but intuitively that farmers will fall prey to the gluttonous appetites for profit of grain companies and the railways, appetites that have been held in check by a steady diet controlled by the Canadian Wheat Board. In the wake of the minister's pronouncements on the death of the CWB a month ago, shares in Viterra dramatically spiked.

Moreover, there have been no assurances made by the government regarding Canadian food sovereignty. It is one thing that small family farms will be bought up by massive agribusiness; it is entirely another to see Canadian farms expropriated by foreign interests not unlike the purchasing of our mineral rich lands out west, concerned more with their own national food security and not at all with Canadian food sovereignty.

It certainly does not help that just yesterday the United States took a backward step with buy America and unilaterally thickened the border in an effort to stimulate its own economy. Meanwhile the Canadian government is prepared to give itself a hernia removing all of the tools the Canadian wheat and barley producers rely on to protect their livelihood, including the Canadian Wheat Board.

The number one trade ask by Americans has always been to get rid of the Wheat Board because it gives our farmers a competitive advantage. Now with the Prime Minister as the head waiter and bottle washer to the Americans, we are preparing to hand them a huge agribusiness, their very request on a platter with absolutely nothing in return, not even a modest tip from a country which has shrugged its shoulders and wrapped itself in the shroud of American protectionism.

● (1640)

There have been 14 challenges to the World Trade Organization from the United States demanding that we get rid of the Canadian

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Wheat Board. In every instance, the WTO has ruled in our favour and allowed western grain producers to maintain their valuable resource.

Why are there challenges? It is because the Wheat Board gives our farmers a competitive advantage that is the envy of others around the world. We must make no mistake that once it is gone the provisions our trade agreements say that it can never be brought back. We would be foolish and naive to think that our supply managed industries, like chicken, dairy, eggs and turkey, are not already now being lined up in the sights of the government for their demise.

This is not about limiting choice for farmers. The CWB is in a unique position to market different qualities of grain at different times of the year to different markets through a board that knows it serves the diverse needs of many farmers. Its strength is in the fact that all farmers across the Prairies are in it together. Its elected directors are farmers, too. They understand what it is to sell and market grain, the best grain in the world.

Should this legislation pass, by reducing the number of directors from 10 elected and 5 appointed to simply 5 government appointed directors to the 5-year interim voluntary wheat board, the Conservative government would have it that only its own people, dictated to from the Prime Minister's office, speak to the multitude of farmers.

Overwhelmingly, Wheat Board election after election, directors that support the single desk under the Wheat Board are returned. Farmers elect these directors and yet, once again, suppressing any sort of democratic expression, the government places a higher value on ideology than on the experience of farmers.

These are farmers who understand the virtue of saving \$1,400 per producer car on transportation costs through the CWB's unique bargaining position, a savings that will be almost immediately lost. Presently, it is in a position to negotiate with CN and CP Rail to ensure the adequate supply of producer cars. This, too, will be lost.

One of the more substantial complaints from within the agricultural industry is that Canada is regarded as an unreliable supplier of agricultural products by virtue of the fact that it cannot get its supplies to port along the railway. In large part, this is a direct result of the ongoing disputes between suppliers and CN-CP Rail.

The agricultural industries anticipated that these concerns would be addressed in the rail service review tabled in March of this year. Meanwhile, seven months later, we are talking about stripping prairie farmers of transportation infrastructure while the government shelves yet another report.

The government has failed to appoint a facilitator in good time. It has failed to address the day-to-day logistical issues of shippers, like getting them the right number of cars and on time, and is telegraphing to the farmers, who will be affected by this in large part, farmers who do not have immediate access to the border, farmers who are not on the main line, that where once their concerns were difficult to address with the rail companies, now they will be almost impossible to address.

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I have learned, through my discussion with the owners of Shortline Railways, that they will no longer be able to maintain their railways as they will no longer have the support of the Canadian Wheat Board once it is gone. The rest of the farmers will still not have any resolution along the main lines.

As it stands, hundreds of grain facilities have access to only one rail line and are held captive by either CP or CN, subject to their charges. Through the Canadian Wheat Board, farmers have had the clout to, as a unit, stand up to both CN and CP to get the best deal for their transportation costs possible.

In my conversations with western Canadian grain farmers, all too often I have heard tragic stories about the treatment of producers at the hands of the railways. The railway companies have such disregard for wheat farmers that often they will send railway cars with holes in them without any consideration for what grain will be lost along the way. Farmers, individually, are up against a behemoth, where once their collective clout enabled them recourse in the face of such poor treatment.

● (1645)

The government also refuses to acknowledge that there is a value added of \$500 million annually in services provided by the Canadian Wheat Board in the form of critical weather analysis and research and development, as well as the transportation benefits. Even by using a network of over 800 weather stations located on farms across western provinces, the Canadian Wheat Board provides accurate, up-to-the-minute weather information, as well as grain research and innovation.

In a token offering in the legislation, the government is recommending a voluntary check-off to be applied toward grain research and innovation. What farmer will check off additional money for research and innovation while her or his profits are going go up in smoke? However, the government seems intent on spending money, estimated conservatively at almost \$500 million, in a time when it claims that we are still in a fragile economic state, to demobilize an organization that has yet to require any federal funding. It has been farmer funded for farmer profits.

Forsaking billions of dollars in revenue with no sound replacement model is reckless. The government has made it clear that it will only listen to farmers so long as they are saying something the government wants to hear. Canadian farmers know what is in their own best interests and the government would do well to listen to their collective voice, not simply to the voices of the few who will be in a better position than the many to profit from the demise of the single desk system.

For our part, the Liberal Party entirely opposes this reckless, ideological legislation and finds no value in the feckless rhetoric of the minister and members content to vote like lemurs for the demise of a system that is still supported by the majority of its members.

I challenge the minister and the party opposite. If they are not afraid of the results of a plebiscite on the continued existence of the single desk system and if they truly feel that a majority of western Canadian farmers are on side with their prescription for the death of the Canadian Wheat Board, they should withdraw their legislation and hold their own plebiscite on the issue, as mandated by the very

legislation they hope to destroy, the very legislation that western Canadian farmers hold so sacrosanct, that the necessity for democratic expression is enshrined within it to protect farmers from the very abuse that the Minister of Agriculture is currently perpetrating.

In closing, I move:

That the debate be now adjourned.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**Some hon. members:** No.

**The Deputy Speaker:** All those in favour of the motion will please say yea.

**Some hon. members:** Yea.

**The Deputy Speaker:** All those opposed will please say nay.

**Some hon. members:** Nay.

**The Deputy Speaker:** In my opinion the nays have it.

*And five or more members having risen:*

**The Deputy Speaker:** Call in the members.

● (1730)

[Translation]

(The House divided on the motion, which was negated on the following division:)

(Division No. 40)

### YEAS

#### Members

Allen (Welland)  
Angus  
Atamanenko  
Bélanger  
Benskin  
Blanchette  
Boivin  
Boulerice  
Brison  
Byrne  
Cascy  
Chisholm  
Chow  
Cleary  
Comartin  
Cotler  
Davies (Vancouver Kingsway)  
Dewar  
Donnelly  
Duncan (Etobicoke North)  
Dussault  
Eyking  
Freeman  
Garneau  
Genest  
Giguère  
Goodale  
Grogulic  
Harris (St. John's East)  
Hsu  
Hyer  
Julian  
Lamoureux  
Larose

Andrews  
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 LeBlanc (LaSalle—Émard)  
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 Aglukkaq  
 Albrecht  
 Allen (Tobique—Mactaquac)  
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 Anders  
 Ashfield  
 Baird  
 Benoit  
 Bezan  
 Block  
 Braid  
 Brown (Leeds—Grenville)  
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 McColeman  
 Menegakis  
 Merrifield  
 Moore (Port Moody—Westwood—Port Coquitlam)  
 Nicholson  
 O'Connor  
 Obhrai  
 Opitz  
 Payne

Nil

**The Deputy Speaker:** I declare the motion lost.

[English]

BILL C-18—NOTICE OF TIME ALLOCATION MOTION

**Hon. Peter Van Loan (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, CPC):** Madam Speaker, I rise on a point of order. As is apparent from the two motions in just an hour and a half to attempt to block debate on this issue, I would like to advise that agreement could not be reached under the provisions of Standing Orders 78(1) or 78(2) with respect to the second reading stage of Bill C-18, An Act to reorganize the Canadian Wheat Board and to make consequential and related amendments to certain Acts.

Under the provisions of Standing Order 78(3), I give notice that a minister of the Crown will propose at the next sitting a motion to allot a specific number of days or hours for the consideration and disposal of proceedings at the said stage.

For the benefit—

**Some hon. members:** Oh, oh!

**The Deputy Speaker:** Order, please. I would like to have a little order.

**Hon. Peter Van Loan:** For the benefit of the House, I intend to allot two additional days for second reading of the bill. Including today, this will be three full days of debate. This is a debate about a choice between providing marketing freedom for western Canadian farmers and a seven-decade monopoly. Western Canadian farmers should be able to expect us to make a yes or no decision so that we can let a committee get on with its job of studying this bill in detail.

**The Deputy Speaker:** On a point of order, the hon. member for Malpeque.

**Hon. Wayne Easter:** On a point of order, Madam Speaker, how can the government abuse Parliament by first not allowing a vote of producers, as required under the law, and then get up and propose closure after two hours of debate? How could you allow that to happen, Madam Speaker?

*Government Orders*

**The Deputy Speaker:** Order, please. It sounds a lot like debate to me.

The hon. member for Winnipeg North.

• (1735)

## BILL C-18—SECOND READING

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, in terms of process, it is interesting.

My question for my colleague is of a very serious nature. We have a government, and the Prime Minister—

**Some hon. members:** Oh, oh!

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux:** They are a little sensitive, and I can understand and appreciate why they are so sensitive on this issue.

After there is a debate, members are provided the opportunity to ask questions. I would suggest that the government would want to be a little patient so I can—

**The Deputy Speaker:** Order, please. I am not clear if this is a point of order or a question pursuant to the intervention of the Liberal member.

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux:** It is a question, Madam Speaker, and I do not blame you for the confusion, because the government is very antsy, given the interesting reaction it had.

It is interesting to note that today we have a bill—

**The Deputy Speaker:** Order, please. Questions and comments.

On a point of order, the hon. member for Wascana.

**Hon. Ralph Goodale:** Madam Speaker, following a speech, which was the speech given by the member for Guelph, there is the normal question and comment period. That is what the member for Winnipeg North is endeavouring to do: participate in questions and comments.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Order. I would ask for a little order so that I can hear. I assumed the member was rising on a point of order. I am now calling for questions and comments and I will proceed in that order.

The hon. Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Natural Resources and for the Canadian Wheat Board.

**Mr. David Anderson (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Natural Resources and for the Canadian Wheat Board, CPC):** Madam Speaker, I was very dismayed to hear my colleague from Guelph call for an end to debate on this bill. We have waited years to debate this bill, and now the Liberals do not want to debate it. We are very confused as to why they would not want to do that.

When I heard the member speak a little earlier, it was clear that one of the reasons they do not want to speak—

**The Deputy Speaker:** Order, please. This does not seem to be a point of order. Is it a question?

It is a question. I apologize.

**Mr. David Anderson:** Madam Speaker, I am almost there.

As I heard the member for Guelph speak—

**The Deputy Speaker:** Is this on a point of order? The hon. member for Winnipeg North.

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux:** Yes, Madam Speaker, now it is a point of order.

I was up on my feet shortly after the vote was called. You had asked for questions and I had twice indicated that, yes, I was standing on a question.

What I want to suggest, Madam Speaker, is that you review what has taken place. On both occasions I made it very clear I was standing up for a question. On both occasions, Madam Speaker, you had canvassed to ask if there were questions on the bill, and I said yes.

It was the government, in defying what is truly correct in terms of democratic principles by bringing forward its motion, that caused a bit of excitement. It did not—

**The Deputy Speaker:** Order, please. I think the hon. member has made his point. We will indeed review the blues, but it is normally the procedure, when a member of a party speaks, to go to other members to ask the first question.

That is what I will do at the moment.

I would like to ask the parliamentary secretary to complete his question, so that we can move to an answer.

• (1740)

[Translation]

**Hon. Denis Coderre:** Madam Speaker, the parliamentary secretary said earlier that the Liberals moved the motion to shut down debate of the bill. I would like to make a correction. We wanted to adjourn the debate today but we did not want to shut down debate of the bill. I would ask the member to withdraw that statement. We want to debate and they do not want anything to do with it.

[English]

**The Deputy Speaker:** Very respectfully, this is not a point of order, once again. I would like the hon. parliamentary secretary to complete his question, so that we—

**Some hon. members:** Oh, oh!

**Mr. David Anderson:** Madam Speaker, I appreciate your patience. I understand why it would be tried.

I just got a great reminder in the last couple of days as to why we need to move as quickly as possible on this issue. I finally got to see the teddy bears that the Wheat Board has sent to the opposition. They are little teddy bears eight inches high. They have a little vest on them that sells the Canadian Wheat Board.

Farmers get up early in the morning. Early in the spring they go out in the mud and seed their crops. The Wheat Board takes their money and buys teddy bears. Farmers spend hundreds of thousands of dollars on input for their crop, and the Wheat Board spends their money on teddy bears.

Farmers work all night to get their crops in. The Wheat Board spends their money on teddy bears. There is no clearer reason—



*Government Orders*

**The Deputy Speaker:** Order, please. The hon. member for Guelph in response.

**Mr. Frank Valeriote (Guelph, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, I did not quite hear a question in that comment—

**The Deputy Speaker:** The hon. member for Malpeque on a point of order.

**Hon. Wayne Easter:** Madam Speaker, I want to know why the parliamentary secretary gets up in this House and consistently lies. The Wheat Board had nothing to do with these bears. It is farmers who raised the money at rallies, to make their point—

**Some hon. members:** Oh, oh!

**The Deputy Speaker:** Order, please. Order. I would like a little bit of order, please. The hon. member for Guelph.

**Mr. Frank Valeriote:** First, Madam Speaker, I would like to thank all my colleagues for being so anxious to get up and answer all the questions that are being posed to me. I appreciate it.

I want to point out that the member opposite is misleading Canadians when he suggests that we are trying to adjourn debate on the entire bill. I am disappointed, frankly, that he would try to do that. The adjournment was merely for today, and as has been stated by the member for Bourassa, in fact it is the Conservatives who are attempting to silence the debate on this issue.

I am also disappointed with that. Canadians are disappointed with that. Western Canadian farmers who are looking for answers on why they are not having a plebiscite pursuant to section 47(1) of the Canadian Wheat Board are most particularly disappointed with that.

[Translation]

**Ms. Niki Ashton (Churchill, NDP):** Madam Speaker, what does the hon. member think of the fact that this government is displaying such ignorance and such a lack of willingness to listen to the farmers who have spoken out against what it is doing? The result of the plebiscite has been known for a month now and the majority of farmers have said they want the Canadian Wheat Board to continue operating.

[English]

What does the member think about the fact that the government is showing such contempt for the voices of western farmers who elected pro single desk Wheat Board directors to represent them?

What are the Conservatives going to say to their constituents when they go back to hear from the farmers in their very communities that they want the Wheat Board to continue to market some of the best wheat in the world?

● (1745)

**Mr. Frank Valeriote:** Madam Speaker, it never ceases to amaze me that the government is driven by ideology instead of evidence, first, on the omnibus crime bill and, now, on this particular piece of legislation.

I look at the evidence; I do not look at ideology. The telltale signs are when the government makes this announcement, the shares in Viterro spike. When it makes this announcement, suddenly, Alliance Grain Traders Inc. decides only now to build a manufacturing plant in Saskatchewan to make pasta. Why? Because it said so, because it

knows it is going to pay less for western Canadian grain. Those are the telltale signs. That is the evidence that the Conservative Party refuses to look at when it makes these ideological decisions.

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister said the other day, in terms of responding to a question in question period:

The fact of the matter is that western farmers voted for marketing freedom, and that is what they are going to get.

What I have found is that the current government, more than any other government that I am aware of, just feels that it has this mandate that it can do whatever it is that it wants. If we take a look at prairie grain wheat farmers and the fact that they had a legitimate plebiscite in which in excess of 60% of those grain farmers said, “We want to keep the Wheat Board”, the current government, headed by the current Prime Minister has made it very clear that it does not care what the farmers want, and that is reiterated by the motion that was brought forward just a few minutes ago to limit the amount of debate on the Wheat Board.

My question for my colleague is, what type of leadership does he think this speaks of? How does he feel our farmers in rural Manitoba, Saskatchewan and Alberta are going to respond when they see the type of action that the government has superimposed on them? Does he believe the government really cares about prairie grain wheat farmers?

**Mr. Frank Valeriote:** Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my friend from—

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bruce Stanton):** Order, please. The hon. member for Ancaster—Dundas—Flamborough—Westdale is rising on a point of order?

**Mr. David Sweet:** Yes, thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I waited a few minutes because it got very animated in here.

I would like you to check the blues. The member for Malpeque clearly used unparliamentary language toward the parliamentary secretary, as well as a prop, in his vociferous comments. I would like you to check that and then ask for his apology.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bruce Stanton):** On the first point, I did not hear any unparliamentary language. However, we will check the record to see if such incident did occur and we will get back to the House, if necessary.

On the second point, members will know that the use of props and other objects to support their points, of course, is not permitted in the House. I would encourage hon. members to abide by the Standing Orders.

The hon. member for Malpeque is rising on the same point of order?

**Hon. Wayne Easter:** Yes I am, Mr. Speaker.

In fact, I did use unparliamentary language and I will withdraw that language. Also, I did hold up one of these bears. However, Mr. Speaker, the fact of the matter is, and I will not hold up the bear again, the government cannot bear the truth when it comes to western farmers.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bruce Stanton):** Order, please. I think we are drifting back into debate again.

*Government Orders*

The hon. member for Guelph.

**Mr. Frank Valeriote:** Mr. Speaker, in response to the question posed to me by the member for Winnipeg North, true leadership would have been exercised, would have been demonstrated by a Prime Minister had he allowed the grain farmers to participate in a vote, a plebiscite, conducted by the government.

So desperate are they to have their voices heard because there is not one MP from the west who is willing to stand up for western Canadian grain farmers. So desperate are they, that they had to hold their own plebiscite.

The government does not show leadership at all. I have already described the Prime Minister as being the head chef and bottle washer for the United States of America. That is not unparliamentary. It is the truth that he is prepared to forfeit and sacrifice the well-being of grain farmers out west for the well-being of Americans.

• (1750)

**Mr. Brian Storseth (Westlock—St. Paul, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, this is a very serious matter we are discussing. My constituents have been waiting for this for 70 years. It is really troubling to see the third party make a mockery of this debate. This is a serious debate that we should be having in the House today.

I have a quote here from Professor Charlebois from the University of Guelph. He said:

At the end of the day, single-desk marketing should cease. Such a reform will make Canada more competitive, as the monopoly is a hindrance to our ability to compete globally.

My question is for the hon. member for Guelph. If he will not listen to my farmers who are being oppressed by the tyranny of the Wheat Board, will he at least listen to his own constituents?

**Mr. Frank Valeriote:** Mr. Speaker, I had the opportunity to speak to Mr. Charlebois, and in the same tone he also indicated that there were alternatives to help and fix the Wheat Board that exists. I will acknowledge that the Wheat Board needs to be tweaked, but I will not acknowledge that the Wheat Board needs to be killed.

Further evidence of the fact that the Conservatives ignore the evidence is found in the *Economist*, which said:

Smaller producers, faced with mounting marketing costs, will inevitably have to sell their farms to bigger rivals or agribusiness companies...devastating small prairie towns, whose economies depend on individual farmers with disposable income.

I say shame on the member for not standing up for those in his riding who want the Wheat Board saved.

**Mr. David Anderson (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Natural Resources and for the Canadian Wheat Board, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, it is great to be here today to speak to this bill. We have obviously been fed some pretty thin gruel here over the last little while with a few blobs of misinformation, a hail of exaggeration, and maybe a pinch of almost undetectable truth mixed into a base of fear. The opposition is clearly trying to create fear. We think it is time to be far more responsible than that.

I am pleased to speak to this historic bill which would at long last bring freedom to western Canadian wheat and barley producers. It is a great recipe for western Canadian farmers: a cup of innovation, a healthy dollop of value-added jobs along with buckets of opportunity. It is all going to create a smorgasbord of a stronger

economy for western Canadian producers. Our government's top priority has been the economy, which is why we think this is so important.

By now most western Canadian farmers have finished harvesting what is reported to be a high quality wheat and barley crop that will feed the world. If we remember the spring, there was a challenge to get that crop in. Our farmers have worked hard all summer and finally they have that off in good condition. They have managed that crop every step of the way. They seeded, sprayed, fertilized and harvested it, and this bill would finally give them the freedom to market it.

Many farmers are farming 5,000, 10,000, 15,000, 20,000 acres and we believe that all Canadian farmers should be able to position their businesses to capture the marketing opportunities that are open to them. They do not need anybody from downtown anywhere telling them what to do with their product. The last thing they need is people lecturing them from outside the designated area, especially when they come from areas where people are free to market their own products. Western Canadian farmers are capable of marketing.

I could talk for hours about how much energy has been put into this by so many people for so long. We are finally going to provide western Canadian farmers with that opportunity.

In the June 2011 Speech from the Throne our government reiterated our commitment and that was to ensure that western Canadian farmers have the freedom to sell wheat and barley on the open market. Today, we are delivering on that promise. With this proposed legislation, we would deliver marketing choice for western grain farmers. We are taking a phased approach to allow the industry time to adjust to the significant change to its business.

The minister has spoken to the overall themes of marketing freedom. I would like to walk members and others through the specifics and the significance of this bill.

The bill would change the Canadian Wheat Board marketing system in an orderly and phased approach. The proposed legislation would remove the monopoly of the Canadian Wheat Board, which for so long many farmers have asked for. It would allow the Canadian Wheat Board to be continued as a voluntary marketing organization for up to five years as it makes its transition to full private ownership. It would allow the Canadian Wheat Board to finalize the 2011-12 crop year.

I think this is important in order to avoid market disruption. The goal is for farmers and grain marketers to be able to start forward contracting to the 2012-13 year, well in advance of August 1, 2012, which is the start of the new crop year.



We owe it to producers to provide market certainty so that they can plan their businesses for the 2012-13 year. Frivolous debate and delay will hurt our farmers and our reputation as a reliable high quality grain supplier. I guess that is why I was so disappointed when I heard that the chair of the Canadian Wheat Board had bought the NDP caucus breakfast about a month ago and then begged it to delay this legislation in any way and so long that it would completely disrupt the market when it was introduced. That is not something that is in the best interests of our farmers.

Farmers want to know what their marketing system will be for the 2012 crop. We need certainty so that Canada can continue to sell wheat and barley, and maintain its reputation as a reliable supplier.

I should also point out that the opposition has left some impression that if the Wheat Board goes, the quality of our grain will go down. It is the farmers who grow the quality grain and not the Canadian Wheat Board.

I am tremendously proud of the work that has been done at the Swift Current research station over the years. It has been responsible for the development of most of the varieties that are grown in western Canada and it continues to do great work. From now on we will be able to keep all of those varieties in Canada. We will not have to watch folks across the border often growing varieties that the Wheat Board would not let us register in our own area even after they had been developed there.

The international grain trade works largely on forward contracting. We know, for future purchases and sales, if there is uncertainty in the marketplace about the rule of who can sell Canadian wheat and barley, there is a risk that buyers will turn to other countries to buy that wheat and barley. We do not want that to happen.

• (1755)

Canadian domestic millers and maltsters have told the government that they want to forward contract wheat and barley a year in advance to their bakery and brewery customers. They want this legislation to be in place as soon as possible. They would see January 1 as late but acceptable. We know the Canadian wheat and barley sector can meet international and domestic needs for high quality products. However, farmers and market participants both need certainty in order to plan their business.

During the transition period, the interim voluntary organization will still be called the Canadian wheat board. It will continue to offer farmers the option of pooling their crops with initial prices guaranteed by the Government of Canada, just as is done now. They will continue to benefit from a borrowing guarantee that is backed by the federal government and they will develop a business plan for the revitalization, which will be reviewed by the Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food no later than 2016.

We fully recognize that there will be costs associated with this transition. The voluntary Canadian wheat board may be a smaller organization than the vast monopoly that exists today. The government is prepared to assist with the extraordinary costs associated with winding down the monopoly. Farmers have always paid the costs of operating the Canadian Wheat Board, and I need to point that out and emphasize it, but the government recognizes that they should not be left alone to deal with the costs of transition to a

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voluntary mandate. The government is ready to assist while being responsible for the use of taxpayer dollars.

During our extensive consultations, industry raised a number of valid issues around transition. Over the summer, our working group met a wide range of industry players. Their report does an excellent job of addressing the major transitional issues that will be faced by the trade.

I would like to talk about a few of those issues that have been raised by prairie farmers.

The first issue is the voluntary Canadian wheat board's access to elevators, ports and terminals. The working group on marketing freedom examined this issue in quite a bit of detail. It expects and we would agree with it that grain companies will be actively competing for grain volume on the open market. If farmers want to market through the voluntary wheat board, we expect it will be able to contract with grain handlers to handle this tonnage. This happens with all of the other crops.

Curt Vossen, the president of Richardson International, said:

I think you'll see more players, not less. There may be some joint ventures, some alliances, some mergers of new players and existing, but I think you'll see a proliferation because people will inherently want to get into this market.

That is exactly what we have seen happen in Australia over the last couple of years.

I would add that the elevator industry is onside with the direction that we are taking. Grain companies currently offer handling services to third parties who do not own elevators or port terminals, many of whom are actually their direct competitors.

Wade Sobkowich, executive director to the Western Grain Elevators Association, told the working group:

It makes good commercial sense for grain companies to provide services to the CWB, especially in circumstances where the volume of wheat and barley to be handled is significant.

There is precedent as well for competitive, farmer-owned companies competing in the grain trade through alliances and agreements.

I will give a couple of examples of where that will work and where it is already working. The Gardiner Dam Terminal Ltd. is a producer-owned company that has entered into a joint venture agreement with Vterra. They jointly own and operate an inland grain terminal located near Strongfield, Saskatchewan, and a crop input supply business near Broderick, Saskatchewan. This project will deliver better service to farmers while helping a farmer-owned company capture new growth.

Another great example of farmers taking control of the value chain is the Westlock Terminals, a new generation co-op in north central Alberta. This is a wholly, locally owned co-op. My colleague is very familiar with that, I am sure. It kept a local elevator alive while following the merger of Agricore and United Grain Growers 10 years ago.

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Today, Westlock has 230 members and recently opened a new plant. Its general manager, Clifford Bell, said that marketing choice "will present WTL with opportunities that have never been seen before by our New Gen Co-op. The changes will provide us with new opportunities and ways of exporting grain".

Those are just two examples of how farmers can take charge of their own financial future when they are given the opportunity. I see no reason that a voluntary Canadian wheat board cannot succeed as well.

The government will continue to monitor the elevator access situation and step in if needed. This staged approach will provide the necessary checks and balances to help ensure a smooth transition.

The second valid concern that is being raised is the issue of producers' continued access to producer cars. My area is particularly affected by producer cars. We use more of them than anybody on the Prairies. I used them myself for many years. I used them long before the Wheat Board was even interested in them.

• (1800)

I want to say up front that the Canadian Wheat Board monopoly has no bearing on access to producer cars. I also will say that I have been a champion of and have used producer cars over the years and many of the producers in the area were using those producer cars for decades. It was only in the last seven years that the Wheat Board has been involved with them.

The right to use producer cars is involved in the Canada Grain Act. The Canadian Grain Commission allocates those cars to producers. This would not change. Currently, the CWB manages the marketing of grain shipped in producer cars so shipments are related to a sale. Under the new rules, producers and short lines would be able to make commercial arrangements with the grain companies or the voluntary wheat board to market their grain. So it would just give more options to farmers.

Shortline Railways are expecting some adjustments as they would have more options of marketing partners for the grain volumes that they can attract from producers. I have met with many of the shortlines and I can say that the ones that are forward oriented anticipate great opportunities as we move ahead.

For example, Kevin Friesen, president of the Boundary Trail Railway Company, farms in Manitoba. He says that the government is listening and that he is optimistic about the future for shortlines and the use of producer cars. We are already seeing some very exciting partnerships and what the western producer called a breakthrough in railway co-operation. Mobil Grain Ltd. and West Central Road and Rail have teamed up to create Saskatchewan's 12th shortline railway. Big Sky Rail will run on 354 kilometres of track on former CN lines west of Lake Diefenbaker. President Sheldon Affleck, who has done a great job of running his short line, says that there is the possibility to probably at least double and possibly triple what has come off that line. In a short time, he says, that they have found terrific farmer uptake.

I would like to also take a minute to discuss grain quality. As I said earlier, it is farmers who grow the grain, not the Canadian Wheat Board. The quality will not change because of the changes we would make. The Canadian Grain Commission would continue to

provide its services, regardless of who is marketing the grain. Our customers continue to choose Canada over the competition, not because of the Wheat Board but because of the relentless commitment to quality by all parts of the value chain and, I would say, including, first and foremost, the farmer, the producer.

The current CWB is an administrator and a grain marketer. It is not the decision-maker on varieties registered for production in Canada and neither are the grain companies. It is the Canadian Food Inspection Agency that oversees and approves the registration of wheat varieties. It is the mandate of the CGC to ensure Canada's high-quality standards are continued. Under marketing freedom, both agencies would be continuing their important work.

It is clear there would be much more opportunity for farmers to grow niche varieties of grain. This is an area where the Canadian Wheat Board has fallen down, even though, on the few examples where it tried it, it was very successful. It never developed this to the point where it should have been. Farmers are already aware that there are new opportunities and they are looking forward to taking advantage of them.

I should address the issue of the funding of future wheat and barley research and market development. I think it is important. I heard my colleague talking about it earlier and he clearly did not understand how it has operated in the past. I do not think he realized that there has been a voluntary check-off and that would continue. We understand that research is key in keeping our grain sector strong and competitive. I will assure members here and farmers that a deduction from producer sales would be established to continue the funding by farmers of those activities. Those funds would support the work that has been done by Western Grains Research Foundation, CIGI and the Canadian Malting Barley Technical Centre.

The deduction would be mandated for the government for the transition and, in the meantime, we will be discussing with the industry a long-term mechanism to support research and market development to keep our great industry moving forward. I think this is a good initiative by the government and will be welcomed by the industry.

Our government knows that innovation drives competitiveness in agriculture. We know we need to keep our wheat producers on the leading edge of innovation and this check-off would help to do that.



Fear is always the biggest enemy of change and we need only to look to the Australian experience to see how a wheat industry can prosper once a monopoly is removed. Australia minister of trade, Dr. Craig Emerson, recently said, “it was a remarkably smooth transition”. He continued by stating, “There is no call to go back, to turn back the clock”. He then said, “it’s been one of the great reforms in Australia, and I’d certainly recommend it to everyone”.

Already, we are seeing that same kind of excitement and innovation building not only in Canada but across the continent as buyers begin to jockey for farmers’ business. For the first time ever, the Minneapolis Grain Exchange will be accepting Canadian grain for future settlement. Rita Maloney, its director of marketing and business development, said:

We do see this as an area of growth potential for us as it will allow producers, elevators and marketers across Canada to be able to not only use the contract for hedging, but also be part of the delivery process in the future.

• (1805)

Meanwhile, ICE Futures Canada in Winnipeg is working on creating its own spring wheat and durum wheat futures contracts based in western Canada.

Also, the announcement last week of a pasta plant for the Regina area clearly highlights the great improvements that this change will bring about.

The potential that we have in western Canada from these changes is unlimited.

Marketing freedom will usher in a new springtime for Canadian wheat. Over the past two decades, we have seen wheat and barley acreage decline as farmers voted with their air seeders and turned to canola and pulses. A record harvest of canola is forecast this year.

We must not buy into fear. We must embrace a future, a future where producers will be able to manage their businesses with control over who they sell to, where young farmers will finally have the tools they need to make their dreams a reality, where entrepreneurs can harness innovation and add value to their crops beyond the farm gate, where there are new opportunities in grain marketing and where the property rights of all western Canadian wheat and barley farmers are finally restored.

The future of the western Canadian agriculture industry is bright. We are taking this historic and decisive action today to ensure certainty and clarity for producers and grain buyers, who will soon be entering into contracts for wheat and barley for the 2012-13 crop year. Forward thinking, not fearmongering, made Canada the world supplier of choice for wheat. As Marquis wheat did a century ago, marketing freedom will breathe new life into our grain industry.

The government is committed to delivering on our long-term promise to give western Canadian grain marketing farmers the freedom they deserve. The sky will not fall under marketing freedom. In fact, as the minister said yesterday, the sky will be the limit.

[Translation]

**Ms. Ève Pécelet (La Pointe-de-l’Île, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I have a simple question for the hon. member. The government keeps talking about the strong mandate the public and Prairie farmers gave it to destroy the Canadian Wheat Board. I would like the hon. member to

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tell me why the government refuses to follow what is written in the law. The law states clearly that the farmers have the right to vote on any changes to the Canadian Wheat Board.

What is the government doing about the 60% of Canadians who did not vote for them? Only 40% of Canadians voted for them. What is this government doing to respect the interests of the 60% of farmers who voted by plebiscite to say they wanted to keep the Canadian Wheat Board?

What does the government have to say about that? Why does it not want to hold a referendum or plebiscite? Why does it not want to obey the law? Why does it not want to respect the interests of 60% of the Canadian public? It only respects the interests of the corporations that give it money because we know full well that those who are going to benefit from this are the government’s best friends, the big corporations.

• (1810)

[English]

**Mr. David Anderson:** Mr. Speaker, it is clear that the member has reached some conclusions. I am not sure that she has adequate information to do that.

I would like to give her a bit of the history. She maybe does not know that farmers in western Canada did not choose to have the Wheat Board in the first place. In 1943 the government mandated that the Wheat Board would be made mandatory. In the order-in-council, there were two reasons—

**Mr. Charlie Angus:** Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. The hon. member does not mean to continually mislead the House, but when he said that the farmers of western Canada did not choose to have the Wheat Board, yes they did. They choose it in a plebiscite. I would like to ask him to retract—

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bruce Stanton):** Order, please. The intervention by the member for Timmins—James Bay is more in the range of debate and not a point of order. I will ask the parliamentary secretary to continue.

The Parliamentary Secretary for the Canadian Wheat Board.

**Mr. David Anderson:** Mr. Speaker, I am really concerned about the quality of information the NDP caucus has been given. The member stands on a point of order on something completely inaccurate.

In 1943 the Wheat Board was made mandatory by order-in-council by the government for two reasons.

The first was because the price of grain was rising too high and it wanted to control inflation, so farmers were punished. Their grain prices were held down.

The second reason was that there needed to be a cheap source of grain provided to Europe for the war effort. It was taken from western Canada and shipped to Europe.

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He probably does not know that following the war there was a four year agreement where farmers in western Canada provided their grain at \$2 a bushel below world price so there was cheap grain supplied to England.

He does not know that in the late 1990s farmers went to jail because they wanted to market their own grain.

Those members need to know those points before they stand and talk about this issue.

**Mr. Marc Garneau (Westmount—Ville-Marie, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, my question has to do with quality of information. Specifically, I have a math question for the parliamentary secretary.

Numbers are important. They have been important in my life as an engineer and I sometimes make important decisions based on numbers. I understand that 62% of western farmers who were surveyed said that they wanted to keep the Canadian Wheat Board as it is. Now 62% is a bigger number, and some would say quite a bit bigger, than 38%. Therefore, 62 seems to me to be bigger than 38, but I have trouble resolving that because on that side of the House everybody keeps saying that western farmers all want the change.

I have a simple question for the member for Cypress Hills—Grasslands. Is 62 a bigger number than 38? Please enlighten me.

**Mr. David Anderson:** Mr. Speaker, I would ask the member opposite this. What is more important, his numbers or freedom for our farmers to make their own decisions on the monopoly? He clearly does not understand what has happened on the Prairies. He does not understand even what happened there this summer by the nature of his question. There are some other things the member needs to understand as well.

I do not know if the member knows that for the entire time I farmed I could not sell my own grain. I produced grain for almost 40 years on my farm and I was not allowed to sell it. He does not seem to understand that there is a problem with that. He does not seem to understand that a good solution would be to set up a marketing agency that would be voluntary so those farmers who chose to pool their grain together could do that and those who did not could market their own grain. It is a great solution. It would solve both problems.

**Mr. Kevin Sorenson (Crowfoot, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the member for Cypress Hills—Grasslands for his long-term commitment to this issue and for fighting for freedom for farmers.

I have sat in the House and listened to the opposition talk about the sky falling, saying that farmers will have nobody to market their grain to. The member for Cypress Hills—Grasslands came with a positive speech about a voluntary wheat board that would still give choice.

This fall I had to make a choice to sell my canola. The board would not even take my wheat. Most of the acres that I have now will be going into canola, like many other farmers.

After listening to the doom and gloom from the opposition side about the Wheat Board not being able to exist, why would any grain marketer who works for the Canadian Wheat Board not begin looking for a job with Viterra or Cargill? The opposition is painting the Wheat Board as being imbecilic and unable to compete although it has created markets and clients and sales for decades.

Why is the opposition putting the last nail in the Canadian Wheat Board?

• (1815)

**Mr. David Anderson:** Mr. Speaker, the member for Crowfoot has been an advocate for change. In the 11 years that he has been here he has worked hard on this file as well. We have been joined by so many other folks here. I mentioned Westlock. My colleague from Westlock—St. Paul is one of those people who has worked hard on this issue. He has worked with his folks at home on it as well.

What is probably has happened is the opposition listened to the chair of the Canadian Wheat Board. He came here a month ago and asked us to delay the implementation of the act, but it was for so long that the market would have been completely disrupted and farmers would have been unable to market their grain. That is shameful and embarrassing.

As I said before, the best solution is to give farmers the option of a voluntary pool if they want to put their grain together with their neighbours or they can choose to market their grain themselves. We think that this solution will work. If farmers support a voluntary wheat board, then it will thrive very well. There is no reason for the government to force that on anyone.

**Ms. Niki Ashton (Churchill, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I was not able to hear a straight answer from the parliamentary secretary regarding the government's failure to follow section 47.1 of the Canadian Wheat Board Act that guarantees farmers the right to vote on changes to the Canadian Wheat Board's marketing structure.

I would like to hear why the government is failing to follow the act? Why is it failing to listen to the voices of farmers? Why is it failing to listen to the directors who were elected from the Prairies? Why is the government failing to listen to the rural communities across western Canada that want the Wheat Board to exist? Why do the Conservatives not stand and actually represent the views of westerners in the House?

**Mr. David Anderson:** Mr. Speaker, I am very concerned because the member has stood a number of times and asked us about Churchill and how we will protect it. We came in yesterday with a package that does exactly that.

The member is talking about people not representing their constituents. If she is to represent her constituents, perhaps she should change her position and work with us. She should be willing to stand and say that she has made a mistake and that the government does stand up for western Canadians, for her riding and for the port of Churchill.

We would welcome the member to join with us, vote to support the bill and get it through as quickly as possible to get all those things taken care of so the western Canadian grain industry and the port of Churchill can continue to thrive.



**Mr. Scott Simms (Bonavista—Gander—Grand Falls—Windsor, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, before the members go off about the fact that I am not from the west, the Conservatives have a Minister of Fisheries and Oceans who looks after the west coast and he is from Fredericton, New Brunswick. I suggest those members keep silent on that one.

This is not particularly germane to grain, but I have a quick question on this whole theory about the single desk. The Freshwater Fish Marketing Corporation is a self-sustaining corporation, which was created in 1969, and is the buyer, processor and marketer of freshwater fish from Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Alberta and North-west Territories and part of northwestern Ontario.

Does the hon. parliamentary secretary believe that this, too, is on the chopping block and that the Freshwater Fish Marketing Corporation also limits the freedom for which he is looking?

**Mr. David Anderson:** Mr. Speaker, it is my understanding that this is under the purview of the provinces. The Saskatchewan government has authority over that.

Again, it is good that he speaks for a different part of the country, because we want to provide the same freedom for farmers right across the country. It is the 21st century, people spend, as I have said, hundreds of thousands of dollars on their own operations. They have to pay their expenses. After growing their own crop, harvesting it, buying the bins and the machinery to do that, they should be able to market that product themselves as well.

• (1820)

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bruce Stanton):** Before I give the hon. member for Churchill the floor, I would point out that I will have to interrupt her at 30 minutes after the hour as this is the normal time for the end of government orders for the day.

The hon. member for Churchill.

**Ms. Niki Ashton (Churchill, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, it is an honour to stand here and represent the people of northern Manitoba, people who are truly a key part of the mosaic of Canada.

As the member of Parliament for Churchill, I am proud to bring forward their voices, the countless voices of Canadians who have come up to me from communities like Churchill, War Lake on the Bay Line, Thicket Portage, Thompson, The Pas where the train starts and people living in Carrot River Valley where they grow all sorts of grains, where they are part of the agricultural economy of the west, people from all across northern Manitoba and others from southern Manitoba, like communities like Dauphin, Swan River, Selkirk, from communities in my neighbouring province, Saskatchewan, from Prince Albert, from Indian Head, from Saskatoon, from Regina, from communities like Medicine Hat, and going further westward.

I have had the chance to hear from so many Canadians from my part of the country, from western Canada, who have asked me to bring forward their voices in this House, voices that have been represented time and time again, whether it was through the plebiscite, through voting for the directors on the board of the Canadian Wheat Board or through the messages they sent to their members of Parliament on the government side, messages that often went unheard, certainly in the last few months, the requests for meetings that were ignored from people across western Canada who

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said that they believe in the single desk but that they also believe in the need to have their voices heard.

We hear the government talk about freedom but what about the freedom for farmers to vote? Not only did the government completely ignore the plebiscite that was organized by the Canadian Wheat Board, but it followed that up by failing to follow the government act, the Canadian Wheat Board Act, section 47.1, which guarantees the farmers' right to vote on changes to the Canadian Wheat Board's marketing structure.

This failure to allow farmers to vote, to allow farmers who are raising families on farms or in rural communities, to allow the children and the grandchildren of farmers who now live in urban centres across western Canada to ensure that their relatives are being heard, extended relatives who are still struggling, running the family farm, to be heard, speaks to not just the complete disrespect of democracy in our country, but the most fundamental insult to western Canadians in this House, painting them as though they somehow all agree with what the government is saying.

Where is the proof? Where is the referendum? If the Conservatives are so sure, why do they not go out and poll the farmers? Why do they not go out and implement a real referendum so that we can hear farmers' voices directly?

I think we know why. It is because 22,000 people voted in a plebiscite to say that they wanted the Canadian Wheat Board, because a vast majority of farmers across the Prairies voted for directors who are pro-single desk.

To me and to, I think, so many of us living in the west, the fact that we have a government that fails to listen to the very voices of the people whose livelihoods are being threatened and are at risk, already at risk, might I add, given the economic situation in which they live, it is an absolute insult. It really shows how much the government is willing to take the west for granted.

I would like to share a story about a more personal connection to the Wheat Board and what it has meant, I think, for us not just here at home but internationally. When I was 17 years old, I had the chance to do a study, while I was on scholarship studying in Hong Kong, on the comparative advantage that Canada has when it comes to trading wheat. I had the chance to sit down with people at the Wheat Board, look at its sections in terms of research, hear from people in the sales department and listen to people who were part of the chain of production, going back to the poor, the farmer who produces that wheat.

• (1825)

I got to hear how important the work of the Wheat Board was in making sure that our product was the best product going overseas, knowing that the hard work of people in my hometown of Thompson was part of that chain to make sure Canada's best wheat got on the ship at the port of Churchill to go around the world.

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I also had the chance to hear from our international partners, from our great trading partner, China, which knew that Canada is known for having the best wheat in the world. That brand of Canadian wheat was not Cargill's, nor Viterro's. It was not any corporation's. It was ours. It is ours. It has been the work of the Canadian Wheat Board working hand in hand with farmers, working hand in hand with producers, the people who work along the transportation lines, the people who work to make sure that our product gets overseas, that has ensured for so many decades that we as Canadians have been able to stand proud and call our wheat the best wheat in the world.

Now we have a government that is not only failing to listen to western farmers, but is all too happy to give that brand away, to give those investments made by hard-working farmers, by families, by rural communities, by communities across western Canada away, to give it to Cargill, to give it to Viterro whose stocks go up every time they hear from the Prime Minister or the Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food. Those are the numbers to be noted, because those are the people who will benefit.

We often hear about the Australian case. Unfortunately, even in that discussion, the government has proven to be very misleading. In some ways what happened in Australia was different, but in many ways it tells us what awaits us down the road if the government's wish to dismantle the Wheat Board becomes a reality. Western farmers can look to Australia to know what is in store for them when the single desk is eradicated.

When the Australian wheat board had single desk power, Australian wheat could command premiums of over \$99 per tonne over American wheat, but by December 2008 it had dropped to a discount of \$27 per tonne below U.S. wheat. In three short years, Australia's 40,000 wheat farmers went from running their own grain marketing system, selling virtually all of Australia's wheat, which was 12% of world wheat production worth about \$5 billion, on their own behalf to being mere customers of Cargill, one of the world's largest agribusiness corporations, which is privately owned and based in the United States.

Since 2006 the Australian wheat board's share of Australia's wheat sales has dropped from 100% to 23% nationally, with 25 other companies in the market all looking to make money on the spread between purchase and sale prices.

Australian farmer Ross Philips was interviewed about the loss of the Australian wheat board. He pointed out, "Be careful of giving away your single desk. You will get every single farmer competing against every single farmer".

For the farmer there is nothing more difficult than selling grain to a trader who does that every day. If orderly marketing does not exist, we will see mass bankruptcy for farmers, and we have lost our premiums equal to about 10% to 15% of the price.

This is a voice from our neighbours, a Commonwealth country that has gone down the very same destructive path which the government is taking us down. The story here is not only is the government failing to give farmers the democratic right that they have in law to vote, but it is taking every single westerner for granted.

We in the NDP will stand to fight the government's plan. I look forward to working with western Canadians to make sure that our voices are heard in this House of Commons.

• (1830)

[Translation]

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bruce Stanton):** The hon. member for Churchill will have 10 minutes for her speech and 10 minutes for questions and comments when the House resumes debate on the motion.

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## ADJOURNMENT PROCEEDINGS

A motion to adjourn the House under Standing Order 38 deemed to have been moved.

[English]

### ABORIGINAL AFFAIRS

**Ms. Linda Duncan (Edmonton—Strathcona, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, on September 21, I asked the government two questions.

The first question dealt with residential school survivors. Many of us in the House are receiving information from a lot of our constituents who work with first nations people. They are concerned that some first nations members who had gone to residential schools are still falling between the cracks and are not receiving the compensation that is due to them. The minister responded that the government had implemented a number of programs in co-operation with first nations organizations and that the program was ongoing and essentially that it was doing its best. I wish to follow up with the government in that area.

If the outreach is ongoing, is it based on an evaluation of how effective the program was in order to reach the residential school survivors and to make sure they fully understand the process for compensation? Having reviewed that, has the government determined other measures that may be necessary to make sure that all who are deserving of compensation in fact receive that compensation?

I am simply seeking additional information. Is the government looking into new and different ways to make sure that some people, who I am sure the government would agree deserve the compensation, are not simply falling between the cracks?

The second question I had raised on September 21 related to equal access to education, to the economy and to services that all other Canadians who are non-aboriginal have the benefit of.

I share the concern raised by National Chief Shawn Atleo that aboriginal high school students are statistically far more likely to be incarcerated than to graduate from high school. Apparently, only 41% of aboriginal students graduate compared to 77% for the remainder of Canadians.



The fact is aboriginal women constitute one-third of the women in custody and unfortunately that number is rising. While everyone who commits a crime should face justice, and no one would disagree with that, surely there is an obligation to ensure equity and justice for indigenous Canadians so that they do not fall into the trap of entering into a world of criminal behaviour.

Many have called for more significant measures than have been taken by successive federal governments. In raising these issues, I am not simply pointing arrows at the present government. We have had a succession of reports by auditors general. In fact, we were advised by the former auditor general, Sheila Fraser, that she had tabled 31 reports that raised significant concerns about the failure to address the inequitable treatment of first nations people.

I will quote from a speech that the former auditor general gave following the tabling of her final report. She said:

It's no secret that their [first nations'] living conditions are worse than elsewhere in Canada....What's truly shocking, however, is the lack of improvement. Last year, Indian and Northern Affairs Canada reported that between 2001 and 2006 there was little or no progress in the well-being of First Nations communities. In a wealthy country like Canada, this gap is simply unacceptable.

The auditor general in successive reports raised concerns about poor housing, lack of equal access to education, and the inequities in the amount of funds provided to first nations students as opposed to other Canadians. The auditor general called for major structural reforms. Of interest, a second report that was issued in a coroner's review in Ontario by Justice Stephen Goudge made the same findings and recommended similar structural changes.

The question I ask the government today is: In light of the auditor general's report and her frustrations, as well as reports such as the one by the coroner of Ontario, what is the government doing to address these structural reform needs?

• (1835)

**Mr. Greg Rickford (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development, for the Canadian Northern Economic Development Agency and for the Federal Economic Development Initiative for Northern Ontario, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I am happy to respond in this adjournment debate to the question put by the member on September 21. In fact, I am pleased to rise to speak to the question the hon. member for Edmonton—Strathcona has posed.

There were a number of Indian residential schools in the great Kenora riding and across northern Ontario. Indeed, in my previous life as a lawyer, I had the honour to represent more than 900 Indian residential school survivors principally from across northern Ontario in the negotiations and as a signatory on their behalf. Soon after, I represented many in the independent assessment process, which I will allude to later in my response.

Let me remind the hon. member that our government is committed to a fair and lasting resolution to the legacy of Indian residential schools and is focusing on an agenda of reconciliation and renewal between aboriginal people and all Canadians.

[Translation]

In 2007, the Government of Canada, former students, churches, the Assembly of First Nations and Inuit organizations negotiated and

### *Adjournment Proceedings*

signed the Indian Residential Schools Settlement Agreement. The implementation of the settlement agreement, the largest class action settlement in Canadian history, began over four years ago under the strict supervision of nine courts.

[English]

One of the elements of the settlement agreement is the common experience payment for all eligible former students who resided at recognized Indian residential schools prescribed in the agreement. I am happy to report to this place that, to date, 97% of estimated former residential school students eligible for the common experience payment under the Indian residential schools agreement have received their payments. More than \$1.6 billion have been paid to 77,394 individuals.

It was always understood by all parties to the agreement and by the courts that, indeed, it would be a challenge to reach all potential beneficiaries. To ensure that residential school survivors were aware of their rights and benefits under the settlement agreement, three separate notice plans were widely disseminated in aboriginal and mainstream media in 2007, and in the spring of 2011 in English, French and 16 aboriginal languages from coast to coast to coast.

As an additional effort, a grassroots outreach strategy funded by the Government of Canada was implemented in partnership with the Assembly of First Nations and other aboriginal organizations, as well as Service Canada centres nationally. Combined, these activities reached 98% of the target population of aboriginal people over 25 years old and these efforts were deemed highly effective by the courts. In addition to these efforts, the government established a community impact working group, comprised of several federal departments and national, regional and community organizations.

[Translation]

The Government of Canada also established the community impacts working group, which brings together representatives of several government departments and national, regional and community organizations.

[English]

In addition to the common experience payment, the settlement agreement includes an independent assessment process, the establishment of a Truth and Reconciliation Commission, commemoration and health supports. All of these, I am happy to report, are well under way.

• (1840)

**Ms. Linda Duncan:** Mr. Speaker, while I appreciate the update, unfortunately I do not have a reply to my question. I fully credited the government for the actions taken in co-operation with first nations. I credited it for its efforts.

*Adjournment Proceedings*

The question was specifically this. Having recognized that there are 2% to 3% who have not received the payments, what in addition is being done? Has there been an evaluation or a determination that there may be some other mechanism to get to the last of those people? They could be homeless. They could be people, such as I have spoken to, on the streets in Edmonton who are simply discombobulated by the process, sometimes moving between jurisdictions. I am simply asking, was there an additional attempt to do that?

I did not receive a response to my second question and that is about the Auditor General's concerns about the need for major structural reform in the way that equality is to be provided to the first nations people of Canada, including the fact that the government has not defined the level and range of services or is acting by policy and not law. There is a need to prescribe unambiguous government commitments and, rather than annual contribution agreements, certainty in law.

**Mr. Greg Rickford:** Mr. Speaker, again, I am happy to respond to the question in this adjournment debate as it was posed on September 21.

Implementing the Indian residential schools settlement agreement is an important milestone in Canada's effort to promote reconciliation with aboriginal people, and between aboriginal and non-aboriginal people.

Our government remains committed to ensuring that former students who resided at Indian residential schools are fairly compensated, and are aware of their rights and benefits under that settlement agreement to which all parties agreed to its terms.

The Government of Canada made it a priority to ensure that all forecasted 80,000 residential school survivors are aware of their rights and benefits under the settlement agreement. This was achieved through a court approved notice plan and additional Government of Canada outreach activities.

While September 19, 2011 marked the deadline for the common experience payment applications, former eligible students can still apply through the exceptional circumstances clause of the settlement agreement. We are committed to this process of reconciliation in our relationship with aboriginal people in Canada.

Finally, it is abundantly clear that the Government of Canada has been, is and will continue to be committed to a fair and lasting resolution to the legacy of Indian residential schools.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bruce Stanton):** The motion to adjourn the House is now deemed to have been adopted. Accordingly this House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 10 a.m. pursuant to Standing Order 24(1).

(The House adjourned at 6:42 p.m.)









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